PROSPECTS FOR LEBANON

Lebanon's First Postwar Parliamentary Election: An Imposed Choice

by

Farid el Khazen

Centre for Lebanese Studies
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Contents

Tables

Figures

*Lebanon's First Postwar Parliamentary Election, 1992: An Imposed Choice**

*Farid el Khazen***

Unlike many other developing countries, prewar Lebanon had a long experience of elections and competitive electoral politics, both parliamentary and presidential. In the three decades from independence in 1943 until the outbreak of war in 1975, nine parliaments and five presidents were elected. Although elections were not always orderly, Lebanon's record in them continued to improve. Indeed, from 1960, the country's parliamentary elections became increasingly competitive. Lebanon's last elections before the war in 1972 were the freest, most competitive and most orderly since independence.[1] The 1972 parliament elected five

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* This study was written in 1994.

** Farid el Khazen is Associate Professor of Political Studies at the American University of Beirut and editor of the AUB publication *al-Abhath*. He is author of numerous studies on Lebanon and the Middle East. His most recent publication is *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967–1976* (I.B.Tauris, 1997).

1. See Iliya Harik, 'Mann Yahkum Lubnan' (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar lil-Nashr, 1972). On elections and parliaments, see Antoine Nasri Messarra, *La Structure sociale du Parlement libanais, 1920–1976* (Beirut: Publications du Centre de Recherches, Université libanaise, 1977); Abdo I. Baaklini, *Legislative and Political Development: Lebanon, 1842–1972* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1976); Khayrallah Ghanem, *Le Système éléctoral et la vie politique au Liban* (Kaslik: Université Saint-Esprit, 1983); Sami Abi Tayeh, *Structure socio-juridique du phénomene éléctoral au Liban*, 2 vols (Beirut: Publications de l'Université libanaise, 1982); Jalal Zuwiyya, *The Parliamentary Election of Lebanon, 1968* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972); Salim Sleiman, *Le Parlement libanais* (Zalka: Le Livre Préféré, 1979); Michel Murqos, *al-Jumhuriyya qabla an Tanhar: Dirasa fi Tarikh al-Intikhabat al-Niyabiyya* (Beirut: 1978). On parliaments during the French mandate, see Sonia Debs Daher, 'Le composition sociale des Assemblées parlementaires libanaises 1920–1943', Thèse pour le doctorat 3eme Cycle, Paris 1981.

presidents (though none of these elections took place in the official Hall of Parliament) and survived the war's various phases, multiple protagonists and conflicting aims until the Chamber's term was finally declared to have ended in 1992.

Lebanon's first postwar parliamentary elections held in the summer of 1992 were, by contrast, far more controversial and divisive than most of the prewar ones had been, particularly since 1960. The 1992 elections provoked the sort of sectarian polarisation the country had only seen during periods of crisis. The major dispute centred around the electoral law and the timing, namely the need to hold elections in the summer of 1992 as opposed to postponing them until more favourable political and security circumstances prevailed. The government's insistence on calling an election at that time despite the opposition of (and calls for postponement by) many political and religious leaders, was one of the ironies of the 1992 election. The majority of the electorate was either unconcerned with or opposed to the elections,[2] which was unusual given that the Lebanese had been unable to take part in elections for two decades.

Thus, instead of the political competition between government and opposition that usually characterises electoral politics in the run-up to polling day in democratic political systems, the main issue revolved around the question of timing. How can one account for this anomaly? And how can one explain the lack of interest and enthusiasm by some and the vehement opposition by others, especially since people in countries deprived of elections long for the chance to choose their representatives freely?

The reasons for such unusual behaviour are analysed in the first part of this paper, in which the entire electoral process until polling day is evaluated — preparations for the election, making the new electoral law, opposition politics and timing. In the second part, which examines the conduct of the elections on polling day, the results are analysed and compared with those of previous elections. The final part deals with the political and communal repercussions of the 1992 elections in the light of changes that have taken place in postwar Lebanese politics.

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2. See the public opinion poll conducted by *al-Wasat*, published in London. This showed that 57.3 per cent of Lebanese rejected participating in the elections, while 38.6 per cent favoured participation (4 per cent gave no answer). The highest negative answer was among the youth (61.1 per cent).

PART ONE

Pre- and Post-Ta'if Politics: What has Changed?

The 1992 election was distinctive because it was the first to be held since the outbreak of war in the mid-1970s. It was also distinctive because it was the first to be held in accordance with the Document of National Understanding — known as the Ta'if Agreement — which parliamentary deputies had signed in the Saudi city of Ta'if in October 1989. The Ta'if Agreement was the draft of the amended Constitution, which created what was called the 'Second Lebanese Republic'. The First Republic, established by the 1926 Constitution, had been amended several times, most importantly in 1943 when Parliament ended the French mandate and announced Lebanon's independence.[3]

Although no parliamentary elections were held between 1972 and 1992, presidents were elected in 1976, 1982 and 1989. The presidential elections were held to avoid a constitutional vacuum. Parliamentary elections, however, were postponed because, constitutionally, Parliament could extend its term indefinitely as long as political and security conditions precluded legislative elections. There were several reasons for freezing the parliamentary elections. One obvious one had to do with the lack of stable security conditions.[4] Another was the paralysis of state institutions and their fragmentation along sectarian lines. With the exception of a short period of relative calm in 1977, political crises beset the terms of Elias Sarkis (1976–82) and Amin Gemayel (1982–8). These

3. The term 'Second Republic' is widely used, although it loses precision in constitutional terms. Concerning the mandate and the constitution, see Pierre Rondot, *Les Institutions politiques du Liban: Des communautes traditionnelles à l'État moderne* (Paris: Edition de l'Institut d'Études de l'Orient contemporain, 1947); Albert Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946).

4. For a recent comprehensive work on the war, see Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation* (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies and I.B.Tauris, 1993). On the first phases of the war, see for example, Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958–1976* (Delmar: Caravan Books, 1976); Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); Marius Deeb, *The Lebanese Civil War* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980); Edward Haley and Lewis W. Snider, *Lebanon in Crisis: Participants and Issues* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1979).

crises peaked when Prime Ministers Rashid Karami and Salim al-Hoss boycotted the two final years of Amin Gemayel's presidency. In the decade before 1988, the state did not undertake its normal activities and was in effect replaced by Lebanese militias, the PLO and by Syria, Israel and later Iran. A third reason had to do with the absence of national sovereignty. In most parts of Lebanon, external actors enjoyed influence exceeding that of the Lebanese state and events were more the result of changing regional alliances and policies than of Lebanese internal politics.

The dominant trend in wartime Lebanon has been towards weakening state authority and steadily marginalising its institutions. This was the situation in summer 1988, when an election to select President Gemayel's successor was attempted. The election did not take place because a configuration of local, regional and international forces undermined an orderly transfer of power.[5] Unlike his predecessors, President Gemayel showed little willingness to effect an orderly transition of power.[6] The two other influential figures of the Maronite community — the head of the army, General Michel Aoun, and the leader of the Lebanese Forces (LF), Samir Geagea — rejected what they considered the imposed US–Syrian nomination of Deputy Mikhail Daher as the sole candidate for the presidency. Damascus was in a sufficiently strong position to select the candidate it desired, knowing that influential Christian leaders would reject him. This brought the country to a political deadlock broken by the appointment of General Michel Aoun as head of an interim cabinet in the final minutes of Amin Gemayel's presidential term.

During the two years in which General Aoun held power, the political and security situation in the country deteriorated steadily. This period witnessed the fragmentation of the state into two *de facto* 'governments', one headed by General Aoun, the other by Salim al-Hoss.[7] It was also at this time that successive violent confrontations took place and

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5. On this period, see Karim Pakradouni, *'La'nat al-Watan', Min Harb Lubnan-ila Harb al-Khalij* (Beirut: Abr al-Sharq lil-Manshurat, 1991), pp. 9–13; Sarkis Na'um, *Michel Aoun, Hilm am Wahm?* (Beirut: n.p., 1992), pp. 53–62; Carol Dagher, *General wa Rihan* (Beirut: Manshurat Malaff al-Alam al-Arabi, 1992), pp. 75–121.
6. See Pakradouni, op. cit., pp. 15–23; Na'um, ibid.
7. For an account on that period, see Salim al-Hoss, *'Ahd al-Qarar wa al-Hawa. Tajarib al-Hukm fi Hiqbat al-Inqisam, 1987–1990* (Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm lilmalayin, 1991), pp. 18–97.

culminated in the military operation of 13 October 1990, which removed General Aoun from office and brought East Beirut and other Christian regions under Syrian military control. This event ushered in a new era of political history for Lebanon's post-1943 era and of Syrian–Lebanese relations in the post-1975 period.

It is against this background that the genesis of the Ta'if Agreement and the making of the electoral laws in line with the new rules of the post-Ta'if era can be traced. The question that concerns us here is what made the election possible? Why was it held in the summer of 1992 and not at another date? What were the political and security differences between the situations in the summer of 1992 and in the preceding period?

The country's improved security situation and the cessation of hostilities did not, however, improve the political situation. While the reopening of previously divided regions encouraged a feeling of normality and peace among the Lebanese, the political issues, especially those relating to preparations for holding free and fair parliamentary elections, underwent little change. The political obstacles that had prevented the holding of elections since the mid-1970s had not been fully removed, and the post-Ta'if decision-making process is not confined to Lebanon's internal political structures either in the executive or legislative branches of government.

Reform as Political Bargaining Before and After Ta'if

Politics under the Ta'if Agreement have mirrored the politics of their making and elaboration. Ta'if was an extension of the conflicting interests of a number of local, regional and international actors. These interests took on two central dimensions: an internal one that revolved around the reform of the political system through agreements over power-sharing and ending the war; and an external dimension linked to international and regional political interests that varied from containing the 'Lebanese problem' to hegemony and control.[8]

8. On the National Covenant, see Joseph Maila, 'Le Document d'entente nationale, un commentaire', *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, no. 16–17 (1989), pp. 135–217, and 'L'Accord de Taef, deux ans apres', *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, no. 24 (1991), pp. 13–691; Habib C. Malik, 'Lebanon in the 1990s: Stability Without Freedom', *Global Affairs* (Winter 1992), pp. 79–109; Paul Salem, 'Commentary on the Ta'if Agreement', *The Beirut*

The call for reform has marked Lebanese politics, particularly in the 1970s. It was expressed during the war in the Constitutional Document President Franjieh announced in February 1976. The Constitutional Document gave more power to the office of the prime minister and more balanced confessional representation in parliament. But it could not be implemented so long as the war continued. Another drastic restructuring of power in wartime Lebanon was made in 1985. The balance of power at that time facilitated the imposition of a Syrian-arranged alliance among the three principal militias — the Christian Lebanese Forces, the Shi'ia Amal Movement and the Druze Progressive Socialist Party. This move culminated in the signing of the Tripartite Agreement in Damascus by the three militia leaders on 28 December 1985. In the Christian-controlled areas, Samir Geagea and President Gemayel rejected the Tripartite Agreement and the political repercussions of its failure shaped many of the events during the next two-and-a-half years of Amin Gemayel's presidency — the Muslim leaders' political boycott of President Gemayel; the re-entry of the Syrian army into West Beirut in 1987 at Prime Minister Karami's request; and the Lebanese Forces' control over East Beirut under Geagea's leadership.

This situation continued until the end of Gemayel's term in September 1988, when General Michel Aoun was appointed prime minister of an interim cabinet composed of the five members of the army's Military Council representing Lebanon's major sectarian groups. The three Muslim members who had agreed to join the cabinet had to resign minutes after the cabinet was formed. The 'war of liberation' announced by General Aoun in March 1989 and the subsequent war in East Beirut between the Aoun-led units of the Lebanese Army and the Lebanese Forces ended with yet another war resulting in the ousting of General Aoun, thus making room to start implementing the Ta'if Agreement.[9]

As mentioned earlier, Ta'if had a multinational dimension in which local and external actors were involved. Since reforms stipulated in the

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Review, no. 1 (Spring 1991), pp. 119–72; Augustus Richard Norton, 'Lebanon After Ta'if: Is the Civil War Over?' *The Middle East Journal* (Summer 1991), pp. 457–73.

9. On these developments, see Albert Mansour, *al-Inqilab 'ala al-Ta'if* (Beirut: Dar al-Jadid, 1992), pp. 115–39. Also, see Pakradouni, op. cit., p. 199–229; Na'um, op. cit., pp. 83–114; Dagher, op. cit., pp. 277–332.

Ta'if Agreement were directly tied to the country's military and political balance of power, the content of reform and the timing of these proposals were tied to the settlement of the conflict, which itself was linked to external actors — Syria and the PLO in 1976, Syria and Israel after 1984, and Syria and Iraq after 1988. The mediators of Ta'if included the Arab Tripartite Committee composed of the foreign ministers of Algeria, Morocco and Saudi Arabia. Before long, the external dimension came to dominate the internal one. More importantly, Ta'if's main external supporters who had played a balancing role in its making gradually disappeared from the scene. The Arab Tripartite Committee ended its active participation and the hitherto extensive US role diminished as well.[10] These changes enhanced Syria's influence and bargaining position *vis-à-vis* both the other external actors and Lebanon.

The Ta'if Agreement had a dual role: to introduce constitutional amendments on the one hand and to interpret and implement them on the other. The text was fixed and its interpretation and implementation were continually subject to review and change connected with the shifting balance of power within Lebanon and the region. This situation helps explain the developments that led to Parliament's adoption of an electoral law, and the motives behind the decision to hold elections, despite the vehemence of the opposition and its criticism of both the electoral law and the timing of the elections.

Prior to Election Day

Political figures adopted several contradictory positions on the election and these were constantly revised as preparations for it advanced. Three main positions were discernible — support for holding the election on schedule; opposition to its preparation and timing; and fluctuation

10. On developments in US policy towards Lebanon, see Farid el Khazen, 'al-Alaqat al-Lubnaniyya al-Amrikiyya fi Siyasat al-Tawazun al-Iqlimi', *al-Difa' al-Watani al-Lubnani* (October 1991), pp. 10–29; and 'Min Bayrut ila 'Ukar: al-Siyasa al-Amrikiyya bayn al-Waqi' wa Hajis al-Mu'amara', *al-Difa' al-Watani al-Lubnani* (August 1990), pp. 99–117. On US policy during the preparation of Ta'if, see Abdallah Bou Habib, *al-Daw al-Asfar* (Beirut: Sharikat al-Matbu'at lil-Tawzi' wal-Nashr, 1991), pp. 168–233; Na'um, op. cit., pp. 195–204. Also, see Barbara M. Gregory, 'US Relations with Lebanon: A Troubled Course', *American-Arab Affairs* (Winter 1990/1), pp. 62–93.

between rejection and acceptance. Among those without a clear position, hesitation probably best expresses the 1992 electoral scene with its conflicting opinions over the timing of the election and the inability of many groups to take a decisive stand. Most interesting were the multiplicity of positions and the gulf that separated them as well as the continual change of positions during a short period of only a few weeks.

Government officials were generally in favour of holding an election, but differed in the language of their support and in the way in which they expressed it. While the stand of some was characterised by frankness and clarity, hesitation and embarrassment dominated the positions of others. While President Hrawi, Speaker Husseini and Prime Minister al-Solh officially called to hold the elections under the new electoral law, their official public stands conflicted with the unannounced positions circulating among their supporters. The atmosphere of hesitation and caution was illustrated in the willingness of Hrawi and Husseini to consider proposals to postpone the elections put forward by opposition politicians, notably by former deputies Albert Mokheiber and Boutros Harb[11], only a few days before the elections.[12]

Initially, Speaker Husseini was unenthusiastic about holding elections. He enjoyed influence both inside and outside Parliament, which he did not want to endanger. The elections were significant to him because of the likely changing composition of the balance of power in the new Parliament and because of his local rivalry with President Hrawi in the Bekaa'. The tug-of-war between the two had not abated since the beginning of Hrawi's presidency. The internal crises within the regime (both personal and political) reflected the disharmony between the two men. But Husseini's initial lack of enthusiasm for the election subsequently changed into one of support for it. He was also instrumental in passing the new electoral law in Parliament.

President Hrawi supported the election, reputedly to improve his position both domestically and in relation to Damascus.[13] Prime Minister al-Solh

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11. This was confirmed in summer 1992 by an observer of electoral politics who did not wish to be identified.
12. See *al-Nahar*, 8 August 1992.
13. Author's interview with a senior politician involved in the 1992 elections. He did not want to be identified.

held the least ambiguous position, for he was head of the government responsible for calling the election. Influential cabinet ministers close to Damascus, such as Minister of the Interior Sami al-Khatib, Minister of Defence Michel al-Murr, and Ministers Muhsin Dalloul and Abdallah al-Amin, were the clearest and most decisive in all electoral matters, some even intimating that not holding the election could be the prelude to a return to war.[14]

The positions of other groups, such as political parties and prominent political and spiritual leaders, varied extensively. The groups represented by General Aoun's movement, Dory Chamoun's National Liberal Party, Raymond Eddé's National Bloc Party, and independent politicians, including the widely-supported former deputies Albert Mokheiber and Pierre Dakkash, rejected both the election and the Ta'if Agreement.[15] This forthright position against the election was matched by an equally clear stand that supported holding the election and called for participation. This position was taken by Hizballah, which was the first to announce the names of its candidates in all of the electoral constituencies (except for the South).

Other groups continually shifted positions and refused to make a definite decision until only a few days before the election. These hesitant positions and their development during the two or three months that preceded the election may be classified as follows:

1. Initial support for holding an election, followed by wavering and then participating in the process. Former Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss, who at first called for an election but later avoided making public pronouncements on the issue, best represented this position. He remained hesitant until the last moment. His visit to Syria a few days

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14. On Minister Sami al-Khatib's position, see *al-Safir*, 30 May 1992, and *al-Nahar*, 5 and 22 June 1992. On Minister Abdallah al-Amin's position, see *al-Nahar*, 29 June 1992. On Minister Dalloul's position, see *al-Hayat*, 29 July 1992.

15. At the beginning of July, Raymond Eddé took the position of non-participation in the elections if they were held in 1992. See *al-Nahar*, 9 and 17 July 1992. General Aoun's anti-election stand was well-known, see *al-Nahar*, 13 May 1992. So was the position of National Liberal Party leader Dory Chamoun, see *al-Nahar*, 5 July 1992.

before the election had a decisive effect on his decision to run and hastily to form an incomplete electoral list.

2. Fluctuating support for the election, criticism of the preparations and dissatisfaction with the general electoral scene. This position became one of non-participation in the end. The most prominent representative of this stand was Tammam Salam, who adopted the position of his father, former Prime Minister Sa'eb Salam. The latter, announcing his stand from his residence in Geneva, opposed holding an election in an atmosphere of sectarian polarisation, which ran counter to the principle of communal coexistence.
3. Lack of enthusiasm and dissatisfaction with the entire electoral process. Proponents of this position finally opted to participate in the name of *realpolitik* and to adapt to the powers that be. Walid Joumblatt's stand best expressed this position.
4. Scepticism and initial lack of enthusiasm superseded by the logic of the 'last chance'. Kamil al-As'ad, who decided to run despite the formidable political and security obstacles he faced in the South during the campaign and on election day, took this position.
5. Hesitation and waiting, or seeking a face-saving formula (if participating) and a way back (if not). The Kata'eb Party's simultaneous support and opposition, which later turned into a position of boycott *malgré-soi*, exemplifies this stance of hesitation and inability to make a decision until after it became impossible to find a better alternative.
6. The 'non-position', or waiting for the balance to tip in one of two directions. The issue at stake here was one of not losing the electoral opportunity. This was the position of many deputies and independent candidates in all regions, especially in electoral constituencies where serious preparations for the election were being made.
7. The position of independent candidates in Mount Lebanon, where the boycott was strongest, was unique. It reflected the vicissitudes of all the electoral positions and took its final form a few days before the election. This stand was tied to conditions in the electoral constituencies, their special problems and particular political and sectarian make-up. Some Christian candidates in the Chouf and Aley linked their participation to finding a solution to the issue of the Christians

displaced from the Mountain on the basis that it was difficult to justify running in a constituency where most of the voters were unable to return to their villages and regain their property and homes.

In Mount Lebanon's other districts, the decision to participate was taken after exhausting all means of political escape. This applied to the respected political figure of Nassib Lahoud, a Maronite candidate for the Northern Metn. In the constituencies of Jbeil and Ba'abda, the boycott opened the way for 'infiltrators' intent on entering Parliament at any cost, with or without the votes. Finally, the Kisriwan-Ftouh district had a distinctive situation in view of the region's political and sectarian make-up. The widespread opposition the election elicited, coupled with the opposition of the Maronite patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir, made inevitable the withdrawal of the principal candidates, especially Minister Faris Boueiz and the two el Khazen family candidates, which led to the cancellation of the election. By-elections in this region were then held on 11 October and were dominated by purely local political considerations.[16]

The multiplicity of stands, the hesitation and the inability of politicians to act decisively existed because final decisions on electoral issues were not strictly Lebanese and did not reflect domestic priorities. The issue of the election generated the same sorts of dynamics as those at play in the preparation and implementation of the Ta'if Agreement. This was particularly evident among some Christian groups, which first rejected the election, then sought a suitable political dressing for accepting it, and finally took a publicly supportive stand.

The boycotters' position reflected a refusal on principle to hold elections under unsuitable conditions, as well as a mixture of other political calculations. Gradually, these positions crystallised, gathering political momentum in favour of the boycott. The boycotting groups had lacked the ability to unify their ranks and to agree on a single strategy to enter the electoral contest. This inability was due to differences among some of the principal boycott leaders and their contending views of the Ta'if Agreement and the current regime.

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16. In the Kisirwan constituency, the Wa'ad Party candidate Sami Khuwayri's insisted on continuing the 'battle', even after the first round had been cancelled. The Wa'ad Party is headed by Elie Hobeika.

Opposition began with the passing of the new electoral law. Among the politicians and political parties expressing their opposition to (or criticism of) the new law were first the boycotting groups, followed by those who were hesitating and finally by those groups participating in the elections.[17] The issue of the electoral law itself became secondary to the decision to hold the elections and begin preparing for them.

The positions of those such as the Kata'eb Party, the LF and Patriarch Sfeir, who not only supported Ta'if but played principal roles in its making, were indicative of the political crisis since Ta'if. The partial implementation of the Ta'if Agreement and its repeated violations alienated those Christian leaders who had given it the required political cover despite popular opposition. This situation widened the rift between them and the majority of Christian opinion. General Aoun had at that time enjoyed wide popular support that went beyond Christian public opinion. President Hrawi, however, lacked the minimum public support necessary to confront this difficult situation. These developments made the Christian leaders and political parties — even those prepared to expend political capital in support of Ta'if — increasingly unable to participate in the election. This, then, was a battle lost on two fronts: participation would mean the loss of a popular base; staying out of the process would mean the loss of a share of power in the regime.

Nowhere was this problem embodied more clearly than in the Kata'eb Party, whose leaders were principal participants in the Ta'if Agreement, putting the party in direct conflict with Aoun. Whether for sheer personal interest and an opportunity to remove Aoun from office or out of political realism, the party leadership went along with the Ta'if process, giving it urgently needed Christian political cover. It then found itself facing a difficult situation it could neither alter nor improve. Under pressure from former President Gemayel (who paid a brief surprise visit to Lebanon to express his opposition to the election), Kata'eb leaders, finding themselves in a no-win situation and faced with a *fait accompli* that

17. On criticisms of the electoral law and the election process levied by the opposition, see *al-Nahar*, 7, 13, 17, 18 and 21 July 1992. Also, see Ghassan Tueni's collected articles on the elections, *Qabla an Yadhamuna al-Ya's* (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar lil-Nashr, 1992), Fu'ad Butros, 'Kitab Maftuh ila Fakhamat Ra'is al-Jumhuriyya al-Ustadh Elias Hrawi', *al-Nahar*, 12 August 1992, and Albert Mokheiber, *al-Hayat*, 11 August 1992.

the election was going ahead as planned, were forced to decide to boycott it at the last moment. This decision was taken after much negotiation with Syrian leaders, with the aim of postponing the elections by a few weeks.

The Lebanese Forces were no better off. Following their loss on two fronts — the loss of the popular Christian base during the war with Aoun and the loss of their promised share of political power in the post-Ta'if period — they were faced with only one option — to boycott the proposed elections. Of all the groups that participated in the Ta'if process, the LF may have been the biggest losers. The disbanding and disarming of the militias — stipulated by the Ta'if Agreement — was thoroughly implemented in areas that were under their control, while other armed groups, Lebanese or non-Lebanese, were either not dissolved or were treated leniently. Indeed, any parliamentary representation to which the LF could aspire would not return even a portion of the considerable influence it had before Ta'if. Even worse, any electoral defeat suffered would be the *coup de grâce*.

While the Kata'eb Party and the LF acted with political considerations in mind, Patriarch Sfeir's opposition to what he termed the 'imposed elections' resulted from factors unrelated to personal or political interest. An open and cautious political moderate, Sfeir was pushed into a hardline position, taking an unambiguous and strong stand on a highly politicised and controversial issue. This was an indication of the degree to which communal relations were polarised. In a series of Sunday sermons beginning in April 1992, Patriarch Sfeir concentrated on Christian objections to implementing the Ta'if Agreement in general and to the conditions surrounding the holding of a parliamentary election in particular.[18] Two years after his important role in giving Ta'if the stamp of Christian legitimacy when Aoun's popularity was at its height, Sfeir

18. On Patriarch Sfeir's position, see *al-Nahar*, 13, 15 and 23 July 1992, and 24 and 27 August 1992. On the Council of Maronite Bishops' position, see *L'Orient Le Jour*, 6 August 1992. On the positions of other religious leaders, see the statement by the Armenian Catholic Patriarch in *L'Orient Le Jour*, 7 August 1992; for the Higher Greek Catholic Council's position, see *al-Nahar*, 25 July 1992. On the position of the Druze Shaykh al-Aql, see *al-Nahar*, 27 July 1992. On the Ja'fari Mufti Qabalan's position against the elections under current conditions, see *al-Safir*, 23 June, and 4 and 18 July 1992. Also see Emile Khouri, *al-Hayat*, 15 July 1992, and Sarkis Na'um, *al-Nahar*, 25 August 1992.

faced a *fait accompli*: a Ta'if Agreement violated in both letter and spirit by three governments of 'national unity', all of which had been formed under the Ta'if banner. Officials sought to 'consult' with Christian political and spiritual leaders *after* decisions had been made. Thus, Prime Minister al-Solh visited Patriarch Sfeir to 'consult' with him about the content of the electoral law the day after it had been passed in Parliament.

Christian grievances and objections were not without justification. First, there was the problem of displaced Christians who had lost their property and homes following the 1983 war of the Mountain.[19] This humanitarian and political problem, which concerned all sects and whose solution was required by the Ta'if Agreement, was not only a marginal issue on the agenda of the three governments formed in the wake of Ta'if, but it also turned into a political dispute between Druze leader Walid Joumblatt and then Minister of State Elie Hobeika.

Adding to these grievances was the selective dissolution and disarming of the militias. Hizballah, for example, despite being one of Lebanon's most heavily armed groups, supported by Iran and Syria, was excluded. While many Christians were content to see the Lebanese Forces trimmed down to size, they objected to the unequal manner in which the disbanding was implemented, especially when the government indulged the other militias such as the Shi'i Amal and the Druze PSP, and when heavily armed Palestinian camps continued to be outside the control of the Lebanese authorities.

Moreover, the formation of cabinets with uneven representation clearly reflected the new political formula of the post-Ta'if era. The appointment of Christians with pro-Syrian leanings in the three post-Ta'if cabinets did not help strengthen national unity; rather, they worked to reinforce the negative political atmosphere and lack of trust in the regime's proposals.

Finally, Christians objected to adopting a new electoral law that violated the Ta'if Agreement. Two issues are important in the law — the number of deputies and the division of electoral constituencies.

19. The total number of displaced in these areas is 450,000, of whom 62 per cent are from Mount Lebanon. See the Ministry of the Displaced's official report, 'Qadiyat al-Tahjir, Waqi' wa Arqam', November 1992.

The Making of the Electoral Law

Part of the reforms envisaged by the Ta'if Agreement involved the need to redress the imbalance in confessional representation in Parliament by equalising the numbers of Christian and Muslim deputies. This issue was actually settled at an earlier date, in the Constitutional Document of 1976, but had not been implemented because no elections had been held since that time.

The Ta'if meetings decided on 108 parliamentary deputies distributed evenly between Muslims and Christians. This meant that nine seats were added to what was previously a 99-member Parliament. Some pro-Syrian deputies in Ta'if had supported raising the number of deputies to 128. This issue provoked a long debate — especially with the members of the Higher Arab Committee — and was resolved only after Prince Saud al-Faisal secured Syria's approval of a settlement that decreased the number to 108, provided the government appointed deputies to fill vacancies.[20] At Ta'if, many opposed raising the number of seats and the issue had been closed temporarily. Several matters at the time were more urgent than the number of deputies. When the election file was reopened three years later, the situation had changed dramatically. By 1992, the earlier balance of power both within Lebanon and between Beirut and Damascus had changed considerably. Amid speculation and rumours in the press about the number of deputies, the Council of Ministers decided to adopt 134, an addition of 26 to the 108 agreed on in the Ta'if document. The stated reason for raising the number of deputies was to modify the representation of some sects (Druze and Greek Catholic). The tacit reason was to make the number 128 more acceptable to its opponents.

The objections that had been put forward were neutralised as Parliament adopted the number 128, though no one knew why 134 had been proposed or why 128 was accepted in the end.[21] The question

20. See Albert Mansour, op. cit., p. 58.

21. At the Lausanne Conference in 1984, the number of deputies was increased to 120: Elie Salem, op. cit., p. 3. We should note that the Syrian-backed Tripartite Agreement signed between the Christian, Sh'ia and Druze militias in December 1985 stipulated raising the number of deputies to 198. On the number of deputies in the new electoral law, see Albert Mansour, op. cit., pp. 124–75. Also see *al-Nahar*, 17 and 25 June 1992.

Table 1: *Distribution of Seats by Sect and Constituency, 1992*

Seats		MA	GO	GC	AO	AC	P	MI	S	Sh	D	A
Beirut	19	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	6	2	1	
Mt Lebanon	35											
Aley	5	2	1								2	
Ba'abda	6	3								2	1	
Chouf	8	3	1						2		2	
Jbeil	3	2								1		
Metn	8	4	2	1	1							
Kisirwan–Ftouh	5	5										
North	28											
Akkar	7	1	2						3			1
Batroun	2	2										
Bsharri	2	2										
Denniyeh	3								3			
Koura	3		3									
Tripoli	8	1	1						5			1
Zgharta	3	3										
Bekaa'	23											
Ba'albak-Hermel	10	1		1					2	6		
West-Bekaa'–Rashayya	6	1	1						2	1	1	
Zahleh	7	1	1	2	1				1	1		
South and Nabatiyyeh	23											
Bint Jbeil	3									3		
Jezzine	3	2		1								
Marje'youn	5		1						1	2	1	
Nabatiyyeh	3									3		
Sidon	2								2			
Tyre	4									4		
Zahrani	3			1						2		
TOTAL	128	34	14	8	5	1	1	1	27	27	8	2

Notes: MA = Maronite; GO = Greek Orthodox; GC = Greek Catholic; AO = Armenian Orthodox; AC = Armenian Catholic; P = Protestant; MI = Minorities; S = Sunni; Sh = Shi'a; D = Druze; A = Alawite

Table 2: *Distribution of Seats by Sect, 1943–92*

	'43–7	'51	'53	'57	'60–72	'92	Change
Maronite	18	23	13	20	30	34	+ 4
Greek Orthodox	6	8	5	7	11	14	+ 3
Greek Catholic	3	5	3	4	6	8	+ 2
Armenian Orthodox	2	3	1	3	4	5	+ 1
Armenian Catholic	–	1	1	1	1	1	0
Protestant	–	1	–	–	1	1	0
Minorities	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Sunni	11	16	9	14	20	27	+ 7
Shi'a	10	14	8	12	19	27	+ 8
Druze	4	5	3	4	6	8	+ 2
Alawite	–	–	–	–	–	2	+ 2
TOTAL	55	77	44	66	99	128	+ 29

Table 3: *Distribution of Seats by Muhafaza, 1943–92*

	1943–7	1951	1953	1957	1960–72	1992	Difference
Beirut	19	13	7	11	16	19	+ 3
Mount Lebanon	17	23	14	20	30	35	+ 5
North	12	16	9	14	20	28	+ 8
South*	10	14	8	11	18	23	+ 5
Bekaa'	7	11	6	20	15	23	+ 8

Note: *The Constituency in the South in 1992 was composed of two Muhafazas: the South and Nabatiyyeh

remains: was the number based on demographic, regional or sectarian considerations, or was it simply a political decision, the goal of which was to serve the interests of certain parties? In either case, proper parliamentary representation was the least important consideration in this regard (See Tables 1, 2 and 3).

Electoral Constituencies: Last-Minute Bargains

Another issue of equal if not greater political importance was the random engineering of multi-member constituencies. The division of these constituencies into varying sizes, rather than on the basis of expanded constituencies was a grave violation of the Ta'if Agreement. The Ta'if Agreement's adoption of the *muhafaza* (without specifying its size) was meant to strengthen national unity, as voters who belonged to various sects would be able to choose, in the expanded constituency, representatives who also belonged to more than one sect. This is not possible in the small constituency, where the numerical majority of a particular sect would dominate both voters and candidates and subsequently lead to the adoption of extreme positions.[22]

In addition to the violation of the principle of the expanded, mixed electoral constituency, the division of constituencies was designed to serve sectarian, political and sometimes personal interests. Previous eras, especially that of President Chamoun, had seen the number of parliamentary deputies and the division of electoral constituencies changed to influence the outcome of elections. Chamoun targeted leaders from all communities (especially Maronite leaders), more specifically candidates for the presidency. Thus, the political game was balanced because the criterion applied to all communities and regions. In 1992, however, a selective method was employed, which was meant to influence election results to serve not only one politician or another but a sect or region at the expense of others (see Table 4).

22. On the differences between the expanded and the small constituencies, and their political effects, see Messarra, op. cit., pp. 303–20.

Table 4: *The 1992 Electoral Law Compared with Previous Electoral Laws*

	Beirut	North	South*	Mt Lebanon	Bekaa'
Number of Electoral Constituencies 1992	Single Constituency	Single Constituency 7 Electoral Units, Qada'	Single Constituency7 Electoral Units, Qada'	6 Electoral Constituencies	3 Electoral Constituencies
Compared with Previous Electoral Laws	Single Constituency, 1943–7	Single Constituency, One Electoral Unit, 1943–7	Single Constituency, One Electoral Unit, 1943–7	6 Electoral Constituencies 1960–72	3 Electoral Constituencies 1960–72

Note: *The Electoral Constituency in the South in 1992 was composed of two Muhafazas: the South and Nabatiyyeh.

In Beirut, the size of the constituency was not a problem. The capital was made into one constituency in which candidates were elected on the basis of the entire constituency and not on that of electoral units within a wider one, as in the North and South where the *muhafaza* constituted the constituency. Beirut was thus the only constituency in which an election took place on the basis of the *muhafaza*.

The capital was easy to deal with in the absence of competition between leading candidates. There were two reasons for this. First, the Christians lacked a leader of the standing of Pierre Gemayel, who had occupied Beirut's sole Maronite seat from 1960 until his death in 1984. Second, the absence of electoral competition for Beirut's three Sunni leaders — former Prime Ministers Rashid al-Solh and Salim al-Hoss, and Tammam Salam, son of former Prime Minister Sa'eb Salam — exacerbated the political vacuum. Beirut's six Sunni parliamentary seats gave these three leaders an opportunity to be elected.

With regard to the other regions (the North, the South, the Bekaa' and Mount Lebanon), proposals continued to oscillate between small and expanded electoral constituencies until a few days before the passing of the electoral law. At first, the creation of two constituencies was proposed for the North, one with a Maronite majority that would give

influence to Suleiman Franjieh (grandson of the late president) and the other with a Sunni majority in which Omar Karami would be the most effective player. This proposal, however, was replaced by the single electoral constituency on the basis of the *muhafaza* with the understanding that the two leaders would join forces in one electoral list. This was because an alliance would be relatively easily attained and because some candidates would be unable to guarantee the required number of votes in their small electoral constituencies, making them dependent on support from other regions. Another reason was to abort the possibility of Samir Geagea's candidacy. In a two-district scenario, Geagea would have constituted a challenge to Franjieh and other Christian politicians, notably Kata'eb leader George Saadeh.

In the South, there was little room for manoeuvre. An expanded constituency was adopted by merging the *muhafaza*s of the South and Nabatiyyeh. The border region was a tense, unstable militarised zone controlled by Israel. Elections on the basis of a small constituency would make this region vulnerable to Israeli domination and provocation. For this reason, an amendment was made to the electoral law stating at the last moment that the elections as a whole would not be cancelled in case polling did not take place in any particular southern constituency. But the other unstated political reason for the merger of the two *muhafazas* was to allow Amal leader Nabih Berri greater room for manoeuvre and thus more influence and control.

The political situation in the Bekaa' and Mount Lebanon, where the 1960 electoral law was applied, differed radically from other areas. There, to guarantee various individual, sectarian and political interests, the *qada'* rather than the *muhafaza* constituted the constituency. In the Bekaa', competition between President Hrawi and Speaker Husseini for local leadership meant dropping the *muhafaza* as the electoral district.

In the same manner, Walid Joumblatt's opposition to a *muhafaza*-wide electoral constituency in Mount Lebanon, in which he would have less influence, succeeded. Damascus supported Joumblatt's veto after several proposals to divide Mount Lebanon into two or three constituencies were dropped. Joumblatt's position reflected two considerations: the first was to guarantee Druze political influence in the Chouf and Aley where there is a large Druze population (as opposed to Mount Lebanon as a whole, where Joumblatt would be subject to the votes of the Christian majority).

Without a solution for the displaced Christians, Joumblatt remained incapable of guaranteeing himself Christian support in the elections or at least getting the numbers his father received in prewar elections. The second was that in a small constituency he would be able to preserve his strong influence within the Druze community, especially in Aley, where he would face competition from the Arslan family. In an expanded constituency, he would be compelled to make alliances with Christian leaders from all parts of Mount Lebanon (outside the Chouf and Aley), as would his Arslan rival, thus weakening his hold over the Druze community and forcing him to deal with strong Christian politicians.

Given this uneven electoral mapping, the 1992 electoral law was in fact three laws in one: Beirut followed the *muhafaza* arrangement in voting and representation; the North and South adopted the *muhafaza* in voting while representation was on the basis of the *qada'*; and in Mount Lebanon and the Bekaa', constituencies were divided on the basis of the *qada'*, as in the 1960 electoral law.

The Political and Sectarian Implications of Uneven Multi-Member Constituencies

Given the selective application of the Ta'if Agreement, what electoral and political implications can we derive from the unequal division of electoral constituencies? What was their effect on sectarian relations in the postwar period and on the stated objectives of strengthening the bonds of national unity? The electoral law, with its narrow sectarian and political features, led to the following results: first, with regard to the ratio of seats to voters, there were very large and unprecedented differences among constituencies. While in the electoral laws of 1943 and 1951 the two largest districts comprised 17 seats in Mount Lebanon and 14 in the South, the rest varied between 13 and 4. In the 1960 electoral law, Beirut's first constituency and the Chouf were the largest electoral units, each holding eight seats. By contrast, the 1992 law lacked balance. In the North, the South and Beirut, voters elected 28, 23 and 19 deputies respectively, while in Jbeil, Kisirwan and Ba'abda, three, five and six were elected. Thus, voters in the North, South and Beirut chose 25, 18 and 13 deputies more than those of Jbeil, Kisirwan and Ba'abda respectively. The difference in the number of seats was highest in 1992, with a

difference of 25 seats for every voter, compared with ten in the closest example in relation to the laws of 1943, 1947 and 1951. (See Table 5.)

Table 5: *Discrepancies in the Number of Seats per Voter in the Largest and Smallest Constituencies, 1943–92*

	1943–7	1951	1953	1957	1960–72	1992
Seats in Parliament	55	77	44	66	99	128
Largest Constituency	17 Mount Lebanon	14 South	2 Several Constituencies	6 Beirut's First Constituency	8 Chouf and Beirut's First Constituency	28 North
Smallest Constituency	7 Bekaa'	4 Akkar	1 Several Constituencies	1 Several Constituencies	1 Sidon	3 Jbeil
Difference	10	10	1	5	7	25

The voters' lack of familiarity with the large number of candidates in the expanded constituencies makes the problem even more acute. Candidates were given insufficient time to make themselves known to the electorate, for they themselves did not know in what kind of electoral district they would run, with whom they would make alliances and which constituency to target. These unknowns remained unresolved until five weeks before the elections in the North and the Bekaa', six weeks in Mount Lebanon and Beirut, and seven weeks in the South.

In a matter of a few days, candidates were supposed to campaign and make electoral alliances without knowing who their running mates would be. In fact, most electoral lists were officially announced four or five days before polling.[23] This contrasted sharply with prewar elections when

23. In Beirut, former premier Salim al-Hoss announced his incomplete list on 24 August, or six days before the election. In the Northern Metn, the one list that was formed was announced on 27 August, ten days before the elections on 7 September. Hizballah was the first to announce the names of its candidates in the Bekaa', Beirut and Ba'abda on 5 August, or 18 days before the elections began.

electoral laws were passed several months in advance or were established from previous elections, and when preparations and electoral campaigns began six months to a year before election day.

The electoral constituencies, of sundry numerical and geographical sizes, were designed to serve a variety of purposes. The desired objective of a district with a given size determines its function. If expressing the priorities of the electoral base is the desired objective, then a small or medium-sized constituency, in which voters have direct contact with their representatives and can easily reach them and hold them accountable, is the most suitable. Likewise, the representatives are most aware of the needs of the voters and most concerned with complying with their wishes.[24]

While an expanded constituency leads to more political and sectarian mixing among people, it strengthens candidates from certain sects. While it encourages the formation of two principal lists in competition with one another, it reduces the options and manoeuvrability of other candidates, especially when the period of preparation for elections is short, as it was in 1992. Examples of this type of division are the two large constituencies of Beirut's first district and the Chouf under the 1960 electoral law, where each district had eight seats. In the Chouf, two electoral lists were drawn up, one headed by Kamal Joumblatt and the other by Camille Chamoun. The choice of members for each of these lists reflected the two leaders' influence rather than their representativeness. A similar pattern occurred in Beirut's first district, where Pierre Gemayel occupied a position of influence that enabled him to choose the list's members from which no Maronite opponent would threaten Gemayel's leadership within the electoral constituency.

By and large, where no established political figures capable of competing with the main leader of a given electoral constituency are present (such as a local notable or son of an influential political family), candidates on the leader's list are chosen regardless of the constituency's size or numerical electoral weight. In pre-1975 Lebanon, this occurred in the South, where Shi'a leader Kamel el-Asa'ad had significant influence extended throughout three *qada*'s (Nabatiyyeh, Marja'youn and Bint Jbeil). The stronghold of the Karami family was the city and *qada'* of

24. On this subject, see Harik, op. cit., pp. 69–77.

Tripoli. In Beirut's third district, the Salam family enjoyed wide influence. In Zahleh and Western Bekaa', the Greek Catholic Joseph Skaff had an electoral base within the entire *muhafaza.* Finally, in Ba'albak-Hermel, the Hamadeh family was influential. The same situation prevailed in 1992 in Ba'albak-Hermel, the Western Bekaa', the Chouf and the South. There were two reasons for this: the first was the formation of coalition candidate lists that included the constituency's principal sectarian leaders (as in the North and South); and the second was the electoral boycott of the principal Christian leaders and political parties.

In addition, the electoral constituency based on the *muhafaza* according to the 1992 law differed from the *muhafaza* as an electoral constituency adopted by the 1943 and 1951 laws. The difference lay in elections taking place on a dual basis, where the *muhafaza* was taken as the electoral constituency and the *qada'* as a unit within it. In previous elections when the *muhafaza* was the electoral constituency, voting for candidates was based on the entire *muhafaza.* Winning candidates received the largest number of votes according to the sectarian distribution of seats in the *muhafaza,* without taking the *qada'* to which the candidate belonged into consideration. In other words, the winners represented the entire *muhafaza* and not a specific *qada'.*

The 1992 law changed these criteria, with candidates being elected on the basis of two considerations: the vote count was taken for the entire constituency or *muhafaza,* but candidates competed on the basis of the smaller electoral unit (or *qada'*). This meant that a candidate in a specific constituency could be elected deputy with a majority of votes in the *muhafaza* while receiving fewer votes than his competitors at the level of the *qada',* the electoral constituency in which his or her candidacy was announced. This ran counter to the principle of true parliamentary representation from the standpoint of the deputy representing his electoral constituency first — before being considered a representative of the *muhafaza.* Under such conditions, candidates who enjoy popular support in their home regions might not win in elections against candidates who might win for political, sectarian, financial or other reasons.

This dualism was also apparent in the results of the 1992 election, especially in the *muhafaza* of the North. In the *qada'* of Batroun, the Maronite candidate Manuel Younes, who received the majority of

votes in the *qada'* (5271 against his opponent's 927), won with difficulty over his competitor Charles Ayyoub, who gained approximately 98 per cent of his votes in other constituencies. The difference between the two was only 232 votes. This was also the case in Akkar, where the difference between Riyad Sarraf and Ibrahim Shuman, candidates for the Greek Orthodox seat, was 421 votes. Sarraf received the majority of votes in the *qada'* (14,859 against 9975) while Shuman, a candidate on the Karami-Franjieh list, received a larger number of votes in other parts of the constituency (30,973 against 27,510). A similar result was recorded in Dinniyeh (*qada'* of Tripoli) where candidate As'ad Harmoush beat his opponent, Hamad al-Samad, by 211 votes.[25]

The 1992 Electoral Law: Who Elects Whom?

The lack of equitable sectarian representation in the 1992 electoral law was another factor that rendered it unsatisfactory. In the absence of a non-sectarian electoral law, the formula of an expanded district, raises the question of who elects whom in a society as confessionally polarised as Lebanon. In mixed electoral constituencies, where the numerical majority belongs to a certain sect, minority sects often feel under-represented.

The two significant cases in the 1992 law were the South and the constituency of Jbeil in the *muhafaza* of Mount Lebanon. In the South, where there are approximately four times as many Muslim voters as Christians ones (397,017 as against 107,793), the five Christian deputies depend almost completely on Muslim voters to win their seats. This is also so in Jbeil, where Christian voters outnumber Muslim ones by five to one (51,944 to 11,835). Likewise, the single Shi'i deputy is elected by the votes of the Christians who form the majority.[26] There were similar cases in the following constituencies: Ba'albak-Hermel, where Muslim voters elected two Christian deputies (Greek Catholic, Maronite) and the

25. Figures are from *al-Safir*, 19 June 1992 and from the official results announced by the Ministry of the Interior.

26. Ibid.; *al-Nahar*, 30 April 1992, and *al-Safir*, 19 June 1992. The Shi'a deputy for Jbeil was elected by Shi'a voters, due to the Christian boycott.

ratio was five to one in favour of Muslims (135,449 versus 26,773); the Western Bekaa', where the ratio was around two to one in favour of the Muslims (65,719 versus 35,629) and there were two Christian seats, one Maronite and one Greek Orthodox; Zahleh, with a two to one Christian-Muslim ratio (82,141 to 36,591), and two Muslim seats, one Sunni and one Shi'a.[27] The total result was that nine Christian deputies were in effect elected by Muslim voters (five in the South and four in the Bekaa'), while three Muslim deputies were elected by Christian voters (one in Jbeil, and two in Zahleh). The net difference was that six Christian deputies are elected by Muslim votes.

In the constituencies of Aley and the Chouf, the imbalance was not only one of demography but of politics as well. In 1992 there was no political competition between the Chouf's traditional leaders. Indeed, not only was there no Maronite leader capable of competing with Walid Joumblatt, the displaced Christians were not physically present in the region and had no safe access to it. The result, therefore, was that seven Christian deputies in Aley and the Chouf (five Maronite, one Greek Catholic and one Greek Orthodox) were elected in 1992 by a majority of votes that came from non-Christian voters (Druze and Sunnis). The same was true of the Chouf's two Sunni deputies on Walid Joumblatt's uncontested electoral list. Sunnis are a minority in the *qada'* in relation to Maronite and Druze voters.

In Beirut, there was a different type of imbalance in sectarian representation. While the numerical difference between Christian and Muslim voters is not large (176,077 versus 161,786), the absence of established Christian leaders made the election of Beirut's ten Christian deputies dependent on Muslim voters (the five Armenian deputies won uncontested).[28] The same situation held for Beirut's Druze seat and, to a lesser degree, the two Shi'a seats, both influenced by the Sunni voters who constitute a majority in Beirut. In the election of minority sect representatives in any constituency, voters from the majority sects in the

27. Ministry of the Interior figures, and *al-Safir*, 19 June 1992.

28. There are five Armenian deputies in Beirut: three Orthodox, one Catholic and one Protestant. There was an objection to the Protestant seat going to an Armenian, for the seat was specifically designated to the Protestant sect and the Armenians as a group are represented along sectarian lines (Orthodox and Catholic).

constituency are the most influential factor.

Whether the reasons were demographic (connected with the division of constituencies based on the 1992 electoral law) or political (resulting from changes that occurred during the war) such as the absence of strong leaders and the problem of the displaced, the imbalance in representation in the 1992 elections favoured Muslim and Druze voters. They were able to exercise decisive influence in electing 26 Christian deputies (nine because of the definitive difference in the number of voters in some constituencies, seven because of the problem of the displaced, and ten because of the boycott and the absence of effective Christian leaders), while the influence of Christian voters was decisive for three Muslim deputies (Jbeil was an exception in 1992 because of the Christian boycott). The net result was that 23 Christian deputies were elected to the 1992 Parliament by voters from other sects; this constituted 35.93 per cent of Parliament's Christian deputies and 17.96 per cent of its total.

Tables 6 and 7 show the distribution of deputies who depended on votes from their own sect and from outside their own sect to gain seats, according to the 1960 and 1992 electoral laws and the 1972 and 1992 Parliaments. According to the 1992 law, the Shi'a community enjoys the largest amount of real representation, distantly followed by the Maronites and Sunnis. The other communities' real representation was very weak, as shown in Table 6. In the Greek Orthodox community, for example, none of its 14 deputies was elected by a decisive Greek Orthodox vote, while the Greek Catholic vote was decisive in the election of only two deputies (in Zahleh) out of a total of eight seats for the community.

Had there not been a Christian boycott, this structural disequilibrium would still have remained because the Christian boycott affected Mount Lebanon and, in particular, the constituencies with a Christian majority (Jbeil, Kisirwan, Northern Metn and Ba'abda). In the remaining constituencies, the boycott lowered voter turnout but did not affect the results because the demographic balance leaned strongly in one direction, notably in the constituencies of the South, the Western Bekaa' and Ba'albak-Hermel. In the *qada'* of Ba'abda, and perhaps in Beirut, the results might have been different had Christian voters and leaders participated in the elections.

Table 6: *Number of Winners by Votes of the Candidate's Sect and by Votes of Other Sects, 1992*

	(a)	(b)	(c)	Number of Seats	(d)	Difference
Maronite	14	20	26	34	40	+ 6
Greek Orthodox	0	14	0	14	0	– 14
Greek Catholic	2	6	0	8	2	– 6
Armenian Orthodox	0	5	0	5	0	– 5
Armenian Catholic	0	1	0	1	0	– 1
Protestant	0	1	0	1	0	– 1
Minorities	0	1	0	1	0	– 1
Total Christians	16	48	26	64	42	– 22
Shi'a	20	7	13	27	33	+ 6
Sunni	15	12	29	27	44	+ 17
Druze	4	4	9	2	0	– 2
Alawite	0	2	0	2	0	– 2
Total Non-Christians	39	25	51	64	77	+ 21

Notes: (a) Candidates elected by a dominant majority of voters of the same sect (no dependence); (b) Candidates in mixed constituencies where support from voters of different sects is needed to win the election (partial dependence); (c) Almost total dependence of candidates of a particular sect on voters from sects other than that of the candidate to win the election; and (d) Real representation, computed by adding the number of seats dependent on voters of the candidate's sect to the number of seats totally dependent on voters of other sects (for example, for the Maronites, 14 + 26 = 40).

The Timing of the Elections: An Enigma!

More than any other electoral issue, the timing of the 1992 election was enigmatic. Preparation for the elections did not revolve around discussions over the candidates' political programmes and opposition to government but about the timing of the elections. The issue of timing raised the tone of the political debate and deepened the sectarian divide, primarily because some groups insisted on holding the election in the summer of 1992 despite calls by many political and religious leaders for postponement. The issue of timing was aggravated by the government's

Table 7: *Number of Winners by Votes of the Candidate's Sect and by Votes of Other Sects, 1972*

	(a)	(b)	(c)	Number of Seats	(d)	Difference
Maronite	21	9	6	30	27	– 3
Greek Orthodox	2	9	0	11	2	– 9
Greek Catholic	1	5	0	6	1	– 5
Armenian Orthodox	0	4	0	4	0	– 4
Armenian Catholic	0	1	0	1	0	– 1
Protestant	0	1	0	1	0	– 1
Minorities	0	1	0	1	0	– 1
Total Christians	24	30	6	54	30	– 24
Shi'a	14	5	5	19	19	0
Sunni	12	8	2	20	14	– 6
Druze	4	2	3	6	7	+ 1
Total Non-Christians	30	15	10	45	40	– 5

Notes: (a) Candidates elected by a dominant majority of voters of the same sect (no dependence); (b) Candidates in mixed constituencies where support from voters of different sects is needed to win the election (partial dependence); (c) Almost total dependence of candidates of a particular sect on voters from sects other than that of the candidate to win the election; and (d) Real representation, computed by adding the number of seats dependent on voters of the candidate's sect to the number of seats totally dependent on voters of other sects (for example, for the Maronites, 21 + 6 = 27).

unwillingness (or inability) to come up with a face-saving formula. Some groups, such as the Kata'eb and some independent politicians, could have re-evaluated their position regarding participation had the election been postponed. Indeed, a number of proposals were put forward suggesting a postponement of anywhere between three weeks and six months; one suggested a postponement of three years, in other words until the end of the term of President Elias Hrawi. All these ideas were rejected, including last-minute suggestions for 'improving the electoral

conditions' that had received the implicit approval of Patriarch Sfeir.[29]

What, then, was the 'secret' behind the rush to hold parliamentary elections on 23 August 1992 given that the Lebanese government was not the only party to the decision[30] and that the appointment of 40 deputies to fill vacant seats and correct the disequilibrium in sectarian parliamentary representation had taken place only a year earlier? Deprived of basic state services and unable to bear the economic burden resulting from the sharp decline in the value of the national currency (at a record low in August 1992),[31] the average Lebanese did not consider the election of new representatives a priority.

No single reason determined the holding of elections in August and September 1992 rather than at some other date. Some tied the issue to the redeployment of Syrian troops in the Bekaa' which should have taken place in September 1992, two years after Parliament approved the constitutional changes called for in the Document of National Reconciliation. Others linked the issue to the emergence of a new regional balance of power in the aftermath of the second Gulf war and to the Arab–Israeli peace talks. Still others linked the timing to the upcoming presidential election in the United States.

All attempts to postpone the election failed, including a move by five independent Maronite deputies and Kata'eb leaders to gain a three-week reprieve.[32] Their discussions with Syrian officials and particularly with Vice-President Abd al-Halim Khaddam and Chief-of-Staff Hikmat al-Shihabi failed.[33] Syria's position was firm and brooked no discussion, even with Christian parties close to the Syrian leadership. Regardless of

29. On the many proposals by prominent deputies to postpone the elections, see *al-Nahar*, *al-Safir* and *al-Hayat*, 7 August 1992; *al-Nahar*, 14 August 1992; *al-Safir*, 19 August 1992.

30. See Albert Mansour, op. cit., pp. 187–229; and Sarkis Na'um, *al-Nahar*, 25–29 August 1992.

31. The Lebanese lira–US dollar exchange rate reached its highest level at 2775 lira to the dollar during August 1992, the eve of the elections. On the deteriorating economic conditions in 1992, see Samir Makdisi, 'Fi Khalfiyyat Tawajuhhat al-Siyasa al-Iqtisadiyya fi Lubnan', *al-Zamil* (February 1992), pp. 6–11.

32. The deputies were Foreign Minister Faris Boueiz and Deputies Nassib Lahoud, Pierre Helou, Fuad al-Sa'ad and Auguste Bakhos. See *al-Nahar*, 29 August 1992.

33. See *al-Safir*, 20 August 1992; and *al-Nahar*, 1 August 1992.

the link between the timing of the election and internal or external considerations, holding the election on the announced date became a matter of principle for Damascus, especially after the opposition intensified its campaign and succeeded in mobilising public opinion against the election.

Whatever Syrian calculations were in the beginning, as preparations for the election got under way the issue turned into one of Syria's role and influence in Lebanon. The Syrians saw in regional developments and in Washington's ambivalence about the parliamentary election in Lebanon an opportunity to stick to their hardline position on its timing. Washington sent contradictory signals about its attitude towards the election, with its tacit position differing from its official claim of opposing elections held in an atmosphere of political discord. US tacit support for a *fait accompli* in Lebanon is a policy the Syrian leadership has come to understand since the mid-1970s and has learned to turn to its advantage.

PART TWO

The Electoral Process and the New Parliament

Elections were held over the course of three successive Sundays beginning on 23 August 1992, in an atmosphere of great political tension, with an electoral boycott and call for a strike by the boycott's leaders. The electoral process did not, however, take place in the constituency of Kisirwan-Ftouh where candidates withdrew their candidacies in the face of popular anti-election pressure (the Kisirwan elections were postponed, then held on 11 October). Compared with previous elections, especially in the first three decades after independence, the 1992 election was not subjected to the direct government intervention of earlier ones. However, the intervention that took place prior to election day through the division of electoral constituencies and the composition of the electoral list had a determining impact on the results. Large-scale irregularities, such as inaccurate voter registration and ballot rigging, also tarnished the 1992 election, especially in the North and the Bekaa'.[34] In addition, overtly armed militias, such as Hizballah and Amal in the Bekaa' and in the South, affected both the election campaign and the results.

Significantly, Lebanese parliamentary electoral procedures have been taking place within a context of steady improvement. Despite differing opinions about electoral improprieties in Lebanon, all observers agree that the 1947 election — which led to President Bechara el-Khouri's downfall in 1952 — was the most tarnished by violations in voting and tabulation.[35] The 1972 elections, relatively speaking, were the fairest and had the least direct government intervention in the voting and tabulation processes.

Although it is difficult to present tangible evidence of election day violations, rumours and contradictory accounts of a single incident suggest broader violations or tampering. The differences between constituencies became clear when the votes were tabulated. In some

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34. See Adib Ne'meh, *al-Nahar*, 3 February 1993. According to some newspapers, the name of Yusuf Beyk Karam (died 1889) appeared on the Zgharta electoral list. *Al-Nahar*, 14 August 1992; *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 14 August 1992.

35. On the opposition's criticisms of the 1947 round, see *Jarimat 25 Ayyar: Kayfa Jarat al-Intikhabat al-Niyabiyya fi Lubnan?* (Hizb al-Kutla al-Wataniyya, 1947).

constituencies, results were announced within 24 hours of voting; in others the tally lasted five or six days and took place amid the confusion of rumours and accusations traded among candidates. Questions and doubts abounded about occurrences in the Bekaa's three constituencies (especially Ba'albak-Hermel), in the North and, to a lesser extent, the South and Beirut.

Ironically, the Speaker of Parliament himself was the harshest critic, resigning from his post as a protest against the electoral process in Ba'albak-Hermel.[36] He accused his Hizballah competitors of falsifying the elections, while they and his other opponents retorted that fraud had indeed occurred, but to al-Husseini's advantage. After tabulation had ended in the Bekaa's two other constituencies (Zahleh and Western Bekaa') where competition was strong, serious questioning ensued about the government's handling of the Ba'albak-Hermel elections, in which the two main competitors had close relations with Damascus. Whether or not Damascus had the ulterior motives attributed to it in Ba'albak-Hermel, the election in this constituency was not free of manipulation. An official report on the its tabulation process described in detail the infringements that occurred on election day: breaking and stealing ballot boxes, the disappearance and concealment of voter registration lists, vote tabulations unsigned by the government officials, and tampering.[37] Nonetheless, Hizballah's sweeping victory in winning eight seats (four for its Shi'a party members and four for its allies — two Sunni, one Maronite and one Greek Catholic) was a sign of the party's influence and high level of organisation in the region.

There were also doubts about some of the results in the North, especially in the constituencies of the *qada's* of Tripoli (al-Dinniyeh) and Akkar. There were similar doubts about the Western Bekaa' where

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36. See Speaker Husseini's statements on the Ba'albak-Hermel constituency's electoral violations in *al-Nahar* and *al-Safir*, 24 and 25 August 1992. Also see Albert Mansour, op. cit., pp. 181–6.

37. See the official report for Ba'albak-Hermel, in *al-Nahar*, 2 September 1992. This was the only official report on the elections published in the press. For example, there were 12 opened ballot boxes, 59 without envelopes or with envelopes lacking the red wax seal, 52 lacking reports of results and 23 lacking tabulation lists or signed lists. A television photographer shot footage of an empty ballot box in a supermarket in a town in the Bekaa'! Also, see Albert Mansour, op. cit., pp. 181–6.

Minister of the Interior Sami al-Khatib was a candidate, and about the constituency of Zahleh where the candidates for the hotly-contested Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic seats questioned the results. Another suspicious result was the seat won by a small margin of votes by Prime Minister Rashid al-Solh, for all the other Sunni members on his list lost to Salim al-Hoss's list and to candidates from the Islamist groups. Finally, in the South and the North, accusations were made by Kamil al-As'ad concerning the widespread falsification of results that targeted his list,[38] and sources spoke of artificially large totals received by some candidates to increase their standing.

Composing the Electoral Lists: Choosing 'Winners'

In the 1992 elections, government intervention was most visible in the making of lists of pro-government candidates whom it would support and in the composition of the competing lists even if competition in some constituencies was only in form. Direct intervention by government on election day was not urgently needed. This was due to two reasons. First, the coalition phenomenon, namely the non-competitiveness of the 1992 elections, which gathered influential leaders from various constituencies on one list. This occurred particularly in the North and South, through the expanded constituency. The second reason had to do with the composition of competing lists in a number of electoral constituencies, which in as far as Damascus was concerned kept the final outcome unchanged. Members of competing lists were either supported by Damascus or their relations with Syria were as good as those whom Damascus supported. This was the case in most of the constituencies where there was limited competition, particularly in the North, the South and to a lesser extent Beirut.

In the North, the two principal electoral poles were Omar Karami and Suleiman Franjieh. In other circumstances, it would have been usual for each of the two to lead his own electoral list and compete against the other for parliamentary seats and for the *za'ama* of the North. But here they formed a single list. This 'negative' unity translated into

38. See the detailed report on voting-day electoral violations submitted by Kamil al-As'ad's list, *al-Nahar*, 12 September 1992.

disagreement over local and regional matters. Who would head the list? Who would choose the list's members, and how? Where would the list be announced and the commemorative picture taken? In Tripoli or Zgharta? These differences continued until only a few days before the election and led to a day-long strike in Tripoli in support of Karami's position; those involved maintained that Karami was not given the freedom to choose the members of the electoral list.[39] Differences ended when Damascus intervened.

Likewise, under different circumstances political figures and groups in the South would have been unlikely to have run on the same electoral list. These politicians were either unable to get along (Hizballah and Bahiyya al-Hariri) or were opposed to each other (Hizballah and Amal; the Osseiran and el-Zein families; Nabih Berri and Ali al-Khalil). Only Syria could turn these groups and leaders into allies on election. Kamil al-As'ad, who headed the list competing with Nabih Berri, would not have participated in the elections had he not received Syria's encouragement to do so.

Similarly, in Beirut Salim al-Hoss hesitated to enter the contest until a few days before the election. In other constituencies, especially in Mount Lebanon, no external 'incentives' were needed because there was hardly any competition apart from that of two Sunni candidates on Joumblatt's list, the Shi'a seat in Jbeil and the two Shi'a seats in Ba'abda.

Limited Competitiveness and Unopposed Candidates

In the 1992 election a record number of candidates won unopposed or with nominal competition. This was especially the case with a large number of Christian candidates, as shown in Tables 8 and 9 and Figure 1. The total number of those who won unopposed or without real competition was 54, or about 42 per cent of Parliament's deputies. In a sectarian breakdown, these winners represented 69 per cent of Christian deputies and 16 per cent of Muslim and Druze deputies. Competition was strongest in the Bekaa's three constituencies.

39. On the electoral dispute between Franjieh and Karami in the North, see *al-Anwar*, 5 and 9 August 1992; *al-Nahar* 10 August 1992; *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 10 August 1992.

Table 8: *Number of Winners by Constituency in Unopposed Electoral Contests, 1992*

Constituency	(a)	(b)	Total
Beirut	3 AO, 1 AC	1 P	5
Chouf	3 M, 2 D, 1 GC	2 S.	8
Aley	–	2 D, 2 M, 1 GO	5
Ba'abda	3 M	1 D	4
N. Metn	4 M, 2 GO, 1 GC, 1 AO	–	8
Kisirwan–Ftouh	–	4 M	4
Jbeil	2 M	–	2
North	4 M, 2 A	4 M, 1 GO	11
South	–	2 M, 2 GC, 2 GO, 1 D	6
Zahleh	–	1 GC	1
West Bekaa'	–	–	–
Ba'albak-Hermel	–	–	–
Total	29: 16 M, 4 AO, 1 AC, 2 D, 2 GO, 2 GC, 2 A	25: 12 M, 4 D, 3 GO, 3 GC, 2 S, 1 P	54

Notes: A = Alawite; AC = Armenian Catholic; AO = Armenian Orthodox; D = Druze; GC = Greek Catholic; GO = Greek Orthodox; M = Minorities; P = Protestant; S = Sunni. (a) Candidates facing no rivals from the same sect in the electoral constituency. Candidates who officially registered but later withdrew are not counted; (b) Candidates facing nominal opposition, namely opponents who had no chance of winning, especially in constituencies where only one list was formed.

Table 9: *Number and Percentage of Winners by Sect in Unopposed and Nominally-Opposed Electoral Contests, 1992*

Sect	Unopposed	Nominally opposed	Total won	% won
Christians				
Maronite	16	12	28	82.35
Greek Orthodox	2	3	5	35.71
Greek Catholic	2	3	5	62.50
Armenian Orthodox and Catholic	5	–	5	83.33
Protestant	–	1	1	100.00
Minorities	–	–	–	–
Subtotal	25	19	44	68.75
Non-Christians				
Sunni	–	2	2	7.41
Shi'a	–	–	–	–
Druze	2	4	6	75
Alawite	2	–	2	100
Subtotal	4	6	10	15.62
Total Christians and non-Christians	29	25	54	42.18

Figure 1: *Number of Winners in Unopposed or Nominally-opposed Electoral Contests Among Christians and Non-Christians, 1992*

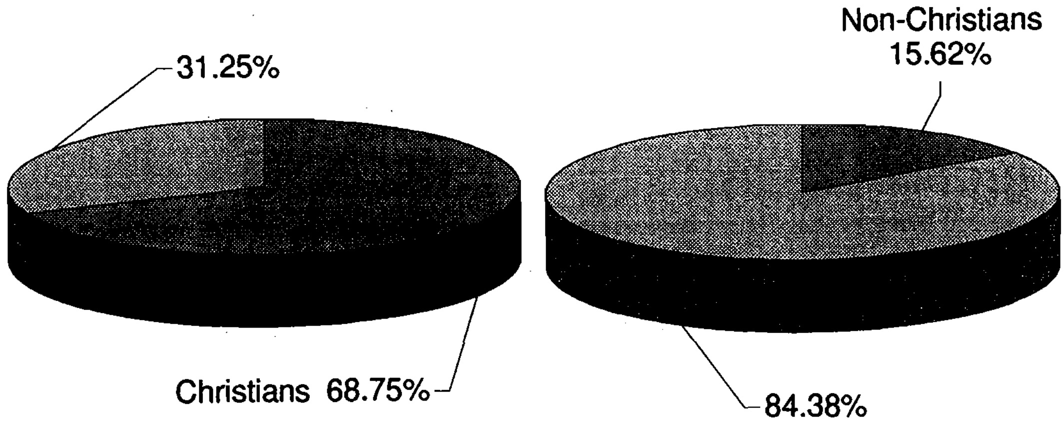


Table 10: *Ratio of Candidates to Seats, 1960–92*

Region	1960 Seats[a]	1960 Cans[b]	Ratio*	1964 Cans[b]	Ratio*	1968 Cans[b]	Ratio*	1972 Cans[b]	Ratio*	1992 Seats[a]	1992 Cans[b]	Ratio*
Beirut	16	49	3.0	39	2.4	44	2.8	44	2.8	19	98	5.16
Mount Lebanon	30	87	2.9	82	2.7	82	2.7	86	2.9	35	115	3.28
North Lebanon	20	34	1.7	58	2.9	57	2.8	67	3.4	28	119	4.25
South Lebanon	18	41	2.3	46	2.6	54	3.0	46	2.6	23	131	5.70
Bekaa'	15	48	3.2	53	3.5	50	3.3	80	5.3	23	139	6.04
TOTAL	99	258	2.6	278	2.8	287	2.9	323	3.3	128	602	4.7

Notes: seats[a] = number of seats; cans[b] = number of candidates; ratio* of candidates to seats. Many of the registered candidates withdrew before election day, but did not do so officially by withdrawing their candidacies at the Ministry of the Interior.

Source: Figures for the years 1960–72 are from Baaklini (1976, p. 143) and figures for the number of candidates in 1992 are from *La Lettre de Cassandre*, August 1992, p. 10 and September 1992, p. 14.

In addition, government officials (and Syrian leaders) encouraged candidacies by people who had no political or popular base from which to lure a larger number of people to vote, so the elections would appear strongly contested and participatory. This was particularly evident in the Kisirwan-Ftouh by-elections, with plenty of candidacies in the second phase. Among 24 candidates, five withdrew and only six seriously vied for five seats.

Table 11: *Ratio of Candidates to Seats by Sect, 1992*

	Number of Seats	Number of Candidates	Ratio of Candidates to Seats
Shi'a	27	211	7.81
Sunni	27	185	6.85
Druze	8	39	4.88
Alawite	2	4	2.00
Sub-total 1	64	439	6.86
Maronite	34	102	3.00
Greek Orthodox	14	57	4.07
Greek Catholic	8	24	3.00
Armenian Orthodox	5	7	1.40
Armenian Catholic	1	1	1.00
Protestant	1	4	4.00
Minorities	1	5	5.00
Sub-total 2	64	187	2.92
GRAND TOTAL	128	639	4.99

Note: Many of the registered candidates withdrew before election day, but did not do so officially by withdrawing their candidacies at the Ministry of the Interior.

Source: Figures for the number of candidates are from La Lettre de Cassandre, August 1992, p. 10 and September 1992, p. 14.

The ratio of candidates to seats within a single sect increased from 3.3 per cent to 4.7 per cent between 1972 and 1992, as shown in Table 10 above. This is not due to an actual rise in the level of competition but to the larger number of seats in the 1992 Parliament and the high number of empty seats in the 1972 Parliament. As Table 11 above shows, the Shi'a recorded the highest number of candidates, followed by the Sunnis and Druze. The Christian sects recorded lower percentages. The Greek Orthodox registered the highest percentage among the Christian sects, followed by the Protestants and minorities. The Maronites had the lowest percentage among the Christians.

Voter Participation: The Lowest in Parliamentary Elections

The 1992 elections generated the lowest level of voter turnout since independence: 30.34 per cent, compared with the post-1960 percentages that fluctuated between 50 and 53 per cent,[40] as shown in Table 12 and Figure 2.

Constituencies and sects contrasted sharply. The Bekaa' had the highest voter turnout and Beirut the lowest. These percentages were recorded in previous elections as well. In 1992, the lowest number was recorded in Jbeil, 6.52 per cent. Jbeil's two unopposed Maronite candidates received 130 and 41 votes each, or 171 out of the district's total of 63,878. Voting came mostly from the district's small Muslim constituency. The highest turnout was recorded in Ba'albak-Hermel, with 51.77 per cent.[41] The low turnout and large differences among constituencies and sects resulted from the boycott in Christian areas and the indifference towards the elections among Christian and Muslim voters. Election results reflected this disinterest, even in regions like the Bekaa' and the South where competition historically is usually strong. In some constituencies, especially in the North, Mount Lebanon and the South, elections were rigged to raise the number of voters to deflate the boycott.

40. On the evolution in voter turnout in Lebanese parliamentary elections, see Iliya Harik, 'Voting Behaviour, Lebanon', in Landau, Ozbudun and Tachau (eds) *Electoral Politics in the Middle East* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), pp. 145–71; and Baaklini, op. cit., pp. 154–7.

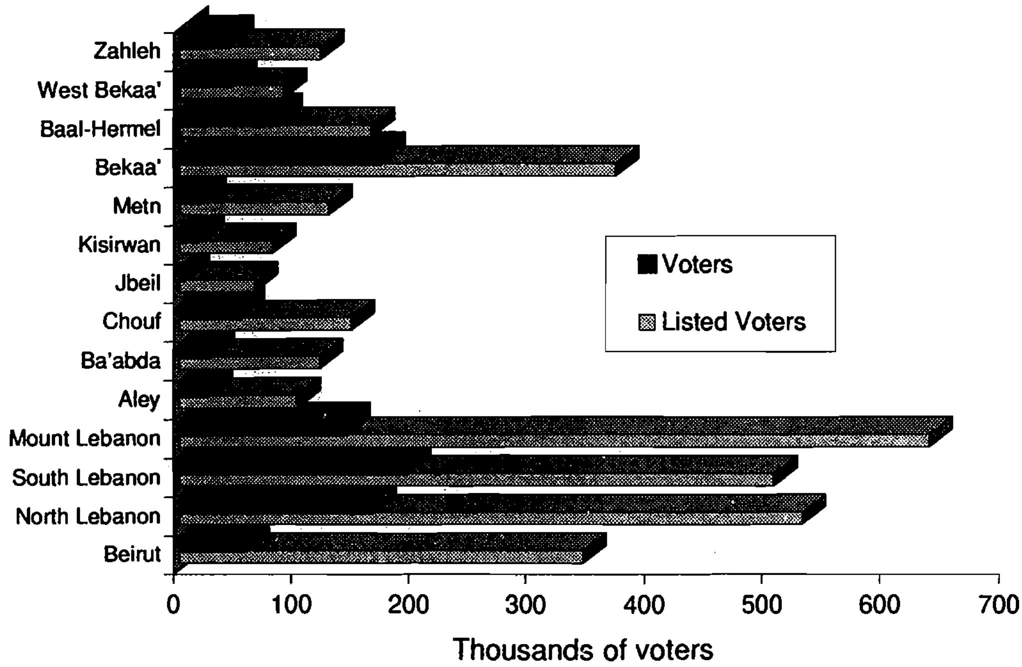
41. Percentages for official results for winning and losing candidates in all constituencies are from Ministry of the Interior reports and figures in various press sources.

Table 12: *Voting Participation by Region, 1960–92*

Region	1960 Votes	1964 Votes	Listed Voters	1968 Votes	%	Listed Voters	1972 Votes	%	Listed Voters	1992 Votes	%
Beirut	71 436	42 636	194 366	82 100	42.24	265 914	93 203	35.05	343 462	55 913	16.28
Mt Lebanon	167 107	178 266	366 363	210 952	57.58	40 210	23 764	59.10	635 687	14 130	22.23
North	110 093	168 073	279 531	133 504	47.76	288 317	153 298	53.17	529 430	163 115	30.81
South	99 512	116 435	213 560	130 549	61.13	240 356	143 853	59.85	504 982	192 302	38.08
Bekaa'	73 716	89 775	182 521	100 916	55.29	202 843	112 172	55.30	370 513	170 780	46.09
TOTAL	521 864	595 186	1 236 341	658 021	52.80	1 037 640	526 290	52.50	2 384 074	723 419	30.34
Percentage	50.00	53.30									

Source: Figures for 1960–4 are from Hudson (1966, p. 175); for 1968 from Baaklini (1976, 195–6); for 1972 from Harik (1972, p. 80). Figures for 1992 are computed from the official results released by the Ministry of the Interior and from *al-Safir*, 19 June 1992.

Figure 2: Voter Participation by Constituency, 1992



Source: Computation is based on the figures released by the Ministry of the Interior and from al-Safir 19 June 1992.

It is important to note that voter turnout in some constituencies had little to do with electoral competition, for there were no rival lists to oppose the candidates. The candidates themselves, particularly in North Metn, which only had one electoral list, wanted people to vote to give the election popular legitimacy. They encouraged them to vote, not only as a show of popular support for candidates but to diminish the effects of the boycott and the absence of Christian displaced voters, as in Chouf and Aley.

The Parliamentary Elite

Some patterns of change that have accompanied the parliamentary elite since 1943 remained prevalent in the 1992 elections.[42] Because of the

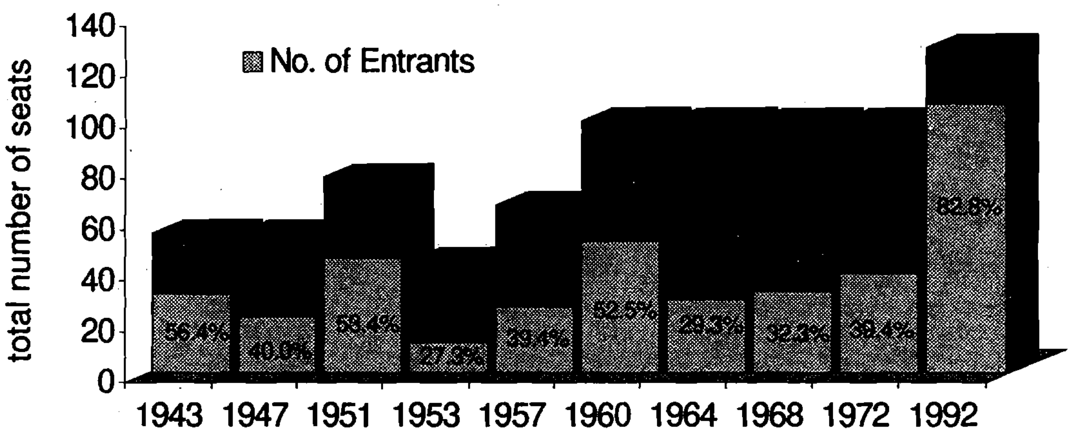
42. On parliamentary elites, see Iliya I. Harik, 'Political Elite of Lebanon', in George Lenczowski (ed.) *Political Elites in the Middle East* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1975), pp. 201–20; Khalaf op. cit., pp. 243–72; Baaklini, op. cit., pp. 141–97; Messarra, op. cit., pp. 141–241.

unprecedented nature of the elections, the 1992 results cannot be used for analysing the political and social changes of the war years. Trends, especially with regard to the youth vote, that might have been demonstrated by less muddied elections, thus remain unclear.

Transformation of the Parliamentary Elite

The percentage of new deputies in the 1992 Parliament set a record, doubling the 1972 figure. Figure 3 shows that the number of deputies who entered Parliament for the first time rose from approximately 40 per cent in 1972, to 80 per cent. This number has been on the rise, especially since 1943, after the promulgation of new electoral laws that increased the number of deputies (1951 and 1960).

Figure 3: *New Entrants* in Lebanese Parliaments, 1943–92*



Note: *New entrants are those who entered Parliament for the first time. Deputies who were appointed to Parliament in June 1991 and were then elected in 1992 for the first time are considered new entrants; that is, new entrants by election and not by appointment.

Source: Adapted from Hudson (1966: 176) and Baaklini (1976: 173). Percentages for the years 1943, 1947 and 1951 were corrected.

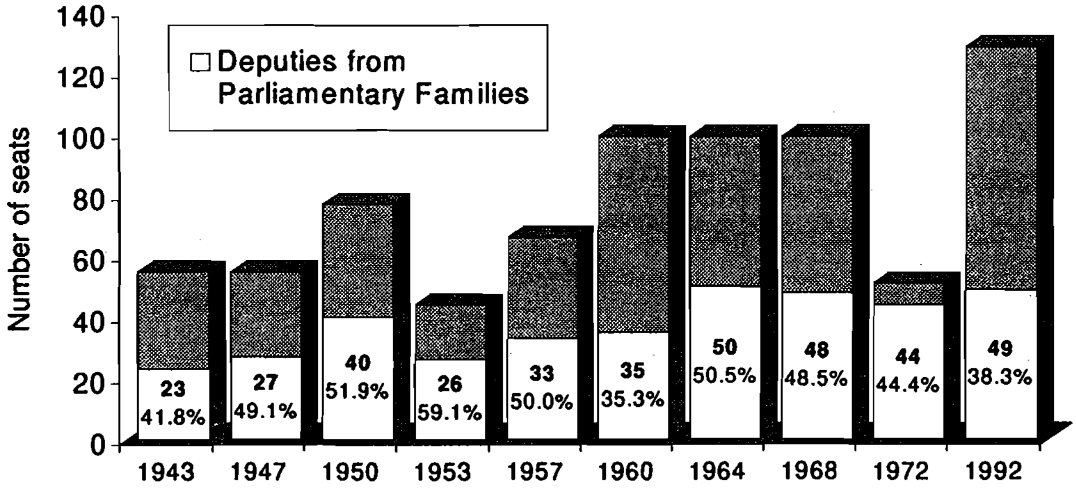
The increase in elite circulation (deputies elected for the first time or who were MPs before 1972) in the 1992 Parliament can be explained as follows. First, the new deputies included political figures who had been

active for many years and who had more influence and standing than the parliamentary deputies. Before the 1992 elections, leaders with secure positions such as Walid Joumblatt, Nabih Berri, Suleiman Franjieh, Omar Karami and Salim Hoss actually represented their communities more effectively than the many deputies in the previous Parliament. This applies to other politicians whose influence was based on their status as representatives of the prevailing political line, more than their status as representatives of their community or their popular base of support. Some examples include Muhsin Dalloul, Sami al-Khatib, Michel al-Murr, Jean Obeid and other politically active figures who enjoyed more influence than the average deputy of the 1972 Parliament. Thus, both the most prominent leaders and the influential politicians were not really newcomers to the political scene, even though technically they entered Parliament for the first time in 1992. They were appointed deputies in 1991 and many were subsequently elected in weakly contested races.

Second, the addition of 29 parliamentary seats increased the number of new deputies. Apart from the nine seats added to equalise the Christian–Muslim ratio (raising the number from 99 to 108), 20 new seats, divided equally between Muslims and Christians, were added. This increase, in addition to the 31 seats left vacant by the passing of their deputies, opened the way for new figures to fill these seats. This brought the total to 60 seats or 46.87 per cent of the current Parliament's total. Third, the absence of elections for two decades encouraged elite circulation. As in the 1960 election, when the number of seats rose by approximately 30 per cent (from 66 to 99), and the percentage of 'inherited seats' fell from 50 to 30.3 per cent, the 22.2 per cent increase in seats in 1992 (99 to 128) was matched by a fall in the percentage of parliamentary families from 44.4 per cent to 38.28 per cent. This percentage of parliamentary families decreased by approximately 4 per cent from the 1968 to 1972 Parliaments, as shown in Figure 4.

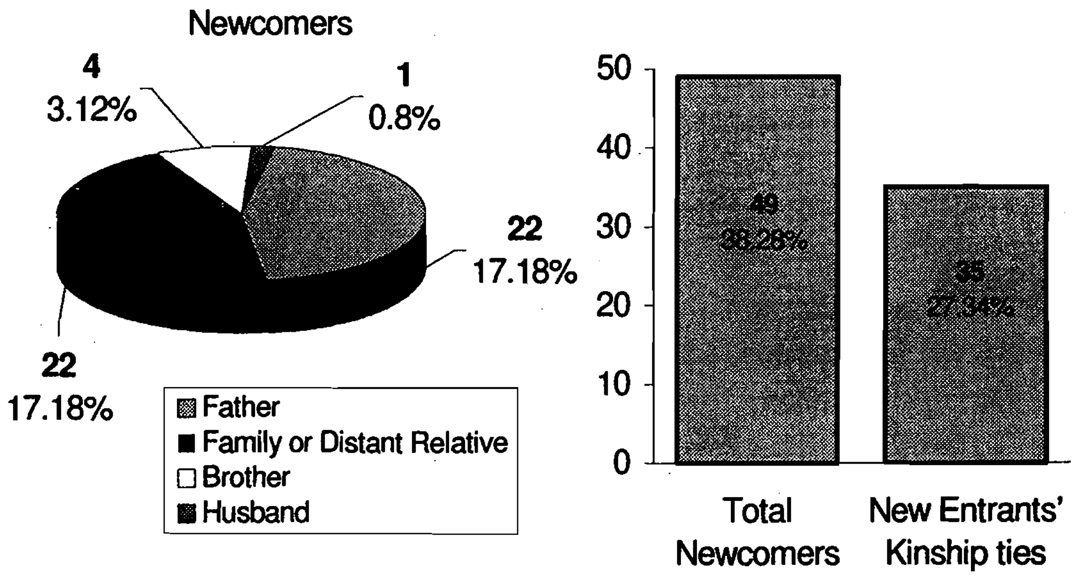
Political inheritance among members of the 1992 Parliament remained (see Figures 5 and 6). With the exception of some Christian political families whose candidates boycotted the elections (Eddé, Gemayel, Chamoun), many established political families placed deputies in the new Parliament. Competition occasionally arose between politicians or candidates within a single family. No new political families emerged

Figure 4: *Kinship Ties: Descendants of Parliamentary Families, 1943–92*



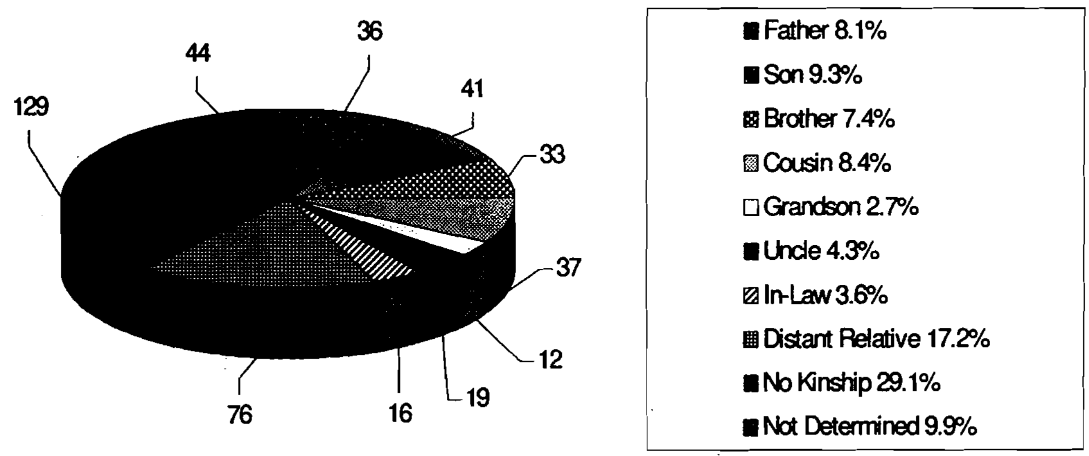
Source: Figures for the years 1943–72 are from Khalaf (1980, p. 258).

Figure 5: *Kinship Ties in the 1992 Parliament: Newcomers (a) and New Entrants (b)*



Notes: (a) a newcomer is a deputy who had entered Parliament in previous elections but was not elected in the last prewar elections in 1972; (b) a new entrant is a deputy who was elected to Parliament for the first time in 1992.

Figure 6: *Kinship Ties in Parliament, 1920–72*



Source: Messarra (1977, p. 183).

in the 1992 elections, but they may in the future, especially within the Muslim sects, if some of the influential leaders remain politically strong and can guarantee the passing of their *za'ama* to their sons and grandsons. The highest percentage of elite circulation occurred within the Shi'a community, particularly in Ba'albak-Hermel, where sharp electoral competition traditionally prevailed among local political forces. In the South, the increase in the number of deputies encouraged competition among Shi'a political families and new figures. With regard to elite circulation, only 12 deputies who were elected in 1972 and were candidates in 1992 lost their seats, while 19 were re-elected. As for the political heirs of 1972 deputies, only two failed, both in the South.[43] The only political family able to send two of its members to Parliament from the same constituency was the el Khazen family in Kisirwan and its two candidates ran on competing lists.

The fourth reason for the increase in the percentage of new faces in the 1992 Parliament was the Christian boycott, especially in Mount Lebanon and Beirut, where political figures lacking popular support were elected

43. Abd al-Rahman al-Bizri (the son of Sidon's former deputy, Nazih al-Bizri) and Nasir al-Khalil (the son of Tyre's former deputy, Kazim al-Khalil). The 12 deputies are Elie Skaff, Suleiman Franjieh, Samir Aoun, Talal Arslan, Omar Karami, Walid Joumblatt, Ali Osseiran, Faris Boueiz, Nayla Maoawad, Marwan Abu-Fadel, Mansour al-Bone and Mustafa Sa'ad (the fathers of Boueiz, Bone and Sa'ad were not deputies in the 1972 parliament).

to fill the vacuum. It is ironic that some of these figures had no political or family ties with the constituency they were to represent and some were not known to the voting public in these constituencies.[44] After excluding 49 deputies who belonged to political families and the 29 new seats added to Parliament's 99, the number of 'new' deputies becomes 50 (128 minus 78), or 39.06 per cent of the total number of seats.

Three women also entered Parliament. Nayla Moawwad (widow of the late president René Moawwad) from Zgharta and Bahiyya al-Hariri (sister of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri) from Sidon won with many votes. Mrs Moawwad received the highest number of votes in the North, surpassing the next candidate, Suleiman Franjieh, by about 15,000 votes. Likewise, Mrs al-Hariri, who took second place on her list, about 1000 votes behind Nabih Berri. The third woman elected, who entered Parliament as an 'infiltrator', was Maha Khouri As'ad (Jbeil) who obtained 41 votes out of the district's total of 63,868. Three other women ran but lost. (See Table 13).

The Average Age of the Deputies

The average age of the Lebanese parliamentary deputy has continued its steady rise since 1943,[45] as Figure 7 shows. This average, however, which is a little higher than 50, did not increase in the 1992 Parliament.

Figure 8 and Table 14 show the distribution of parliamentary deputies by *muhafaza* and by sect. The highest and lowest percentages were recorded in Mount Lebanon while the North also had a high number of deputies over 50 years of age. Among sects, the Maronites had a high percentage of deputies over 50, followed by the Sunnis and the Shi'a respectively. While one would have expected the war to produce a more 'youthful' Parliament, the 20-year absence of elections was sufficient to age the war's 'political elite', for we see that the ages of the new MPs range from the late thirties to the late forties, with the exception of two politicians, Talal Arslan and Suleiman Franjieh, who are in their late twenties. Had elections been held a few years earlier, Franjieh and Arslan would have encountered resistance from their families who might

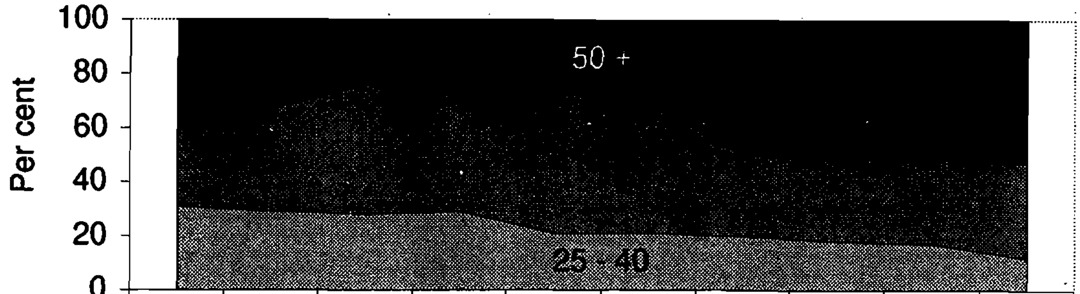
44. This applies particularly to the constituencies of Jbeil, Northern Metn and Beirut.
45. Messarra, op. cit., pp. 224, 231 and 241.

Table 13: *Female Candidates, 1953–92*

Year	Constituency	Candidate	Sect	Votes Received/ Withdrew	No. of Voters in district	%	Result
1953	Zahleh	Emilie Fares	Maronite	Withdrew	–	–	–
1957	Beirut 1st District	Laure Tabet	Maronite	Withdrew	–	–	–
1960	Beirut 3rd District	Munira al-Solh	Sunni	2 165	53 100	4.07	Not elected
1960	Jezzine	Renée al-Hajj	Maronite	601	23 024	2.60	Not elected
1963	Chouf	Myrna Boustani*	Maronite	Not opposed	–	–	Elected
1964	Beirut 3rd District	Munira al-Solh	Sunni	999	58 620	1.70	Not elected
1964	Chouf	Ibrisa Meouchi	Maronite	Withdrew	–	–	–
1965	Jbeil	Nohad So'ayd**	Maronite	9 544	34 000	28.00	Not elected
1968	Beirut 3rd District	Munira al-Solh	Sunni	Withdrew	–	–	–
1968	Jbeil	Nohad So'ayd	Maronite	10 917	36 314	30.00	Not elected
1972	Ba'abda	Emilie Ibrahim	Maronite	850	71 685	1.12	Not elected
1972	Jbeil	Nohad So'ayd	Maronite	9 863	37 210	26.50	Not elected
1972	Jbeil	Zakiya Salman	Maronite	Withdrew	–	–	–
1972	Jbeil	Nazira Tarabay	Maronite	Withdrew	–	–	–
1991	Zgharta	Nayla Moawad	Maronite	By appointment	–	–	–
1992	North	Nayla Moawad	Maronite	90 599	529 430	17.11	Elected
1992	South	Bahiya al-Hariri	Sunni	117 761	504 982	23.30	Elected
1992	South	Bushra al-Khalil	Shi'a	14 677	504 982	2.90	Not elected
1992	Jbeil	Maha Khoury As'ad	Maronite	41	63 878	0.06	Elected
1992	Kisirwan	Mona Hobeiche	Maronite	156	79 431	0.019	Not elected
1992	Kisirwan	Ahkam Zogheib	Maronite	108	79 431	0.013	Not elected

Notes: * By-election following the death of her father; ** By-election following the death of her husband.
Source: Adapted from Abi Tayeh for the years 1953–72 (1982, p. 301).

Figure 7: *Trend in Age Group of Deputies in Percentage Terms, 1943–92*



	1943	1947	1951	1953	1957	1960	1964	1968	1972	1992
■ 50 +	38	33	24	28	27	30	50	52	51	53.12
▩ 41 - 50	31	38	48	43	52	49	30	30	32	35.15
▩ 25 - 40	31	29	28	29	21	21	20	18	17	11.71

Source: Figures for the years 1943–72 are from Khalaf (1980, p. 247).

have chosen older members to lead the family. Interestingly, the average age of deputies from the Islamist groups is lower than the general 1992 average.

Figure 8: *Age Group by Muhafaza, 1992*

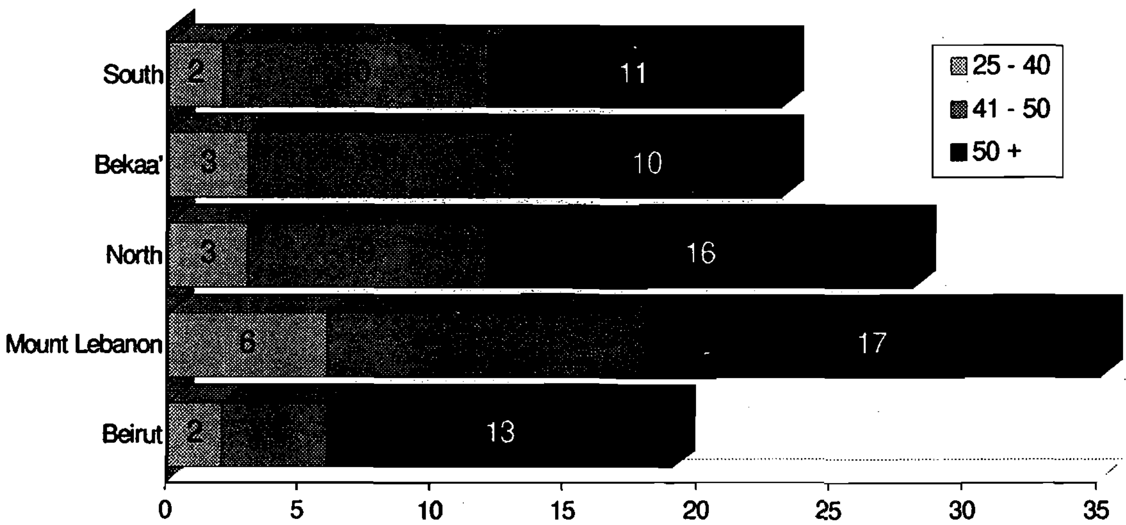


Table 14: *Age Group by Sect, 1992*

	Ma	GO	GC	AO	AC	P	M	S	Sh	D	A
25–40	4	2	2	1	–	–	–	2	4	1	–
41–50	7	7	4	1	–	1	–	9	10	4	2
50 +	23	5	2	3	1	–	1	16	13	3	–

Notes: Among the Christians, Ma = Maronite; GO = Greek Orthodox; GC = Greek Catholic; AO = Armenian Orthodox; AC = Armenian Catholic; and P = Protestant. M = Minorities. Among the Non-Christians, S = Sunni; Sh = Shi'a; D = Druze and A = Alawite.

The 1992 Parliament was also the first not to include deputies from the mandate and independence generations of the 1930s and 1940s. In 1992, only two deputies from the 1950s entered Parliament; the 1972 Parliament had ten deputies who were first elected in the 1940s, and 17 in the 1950s, as Table 15 shows.

Table 15: *Date of Entry to Parliament, 1943–92*

	Before 1943	1940s	1950s	1960–8	1972	1991*	1992	Total
1968	5	7	24	63	–	–	–	99
1972	4	6	17	33	39	–	–	99
1992	–	–	2	8	12	27	79	128

Note: * Appointed deputies in June 1991.

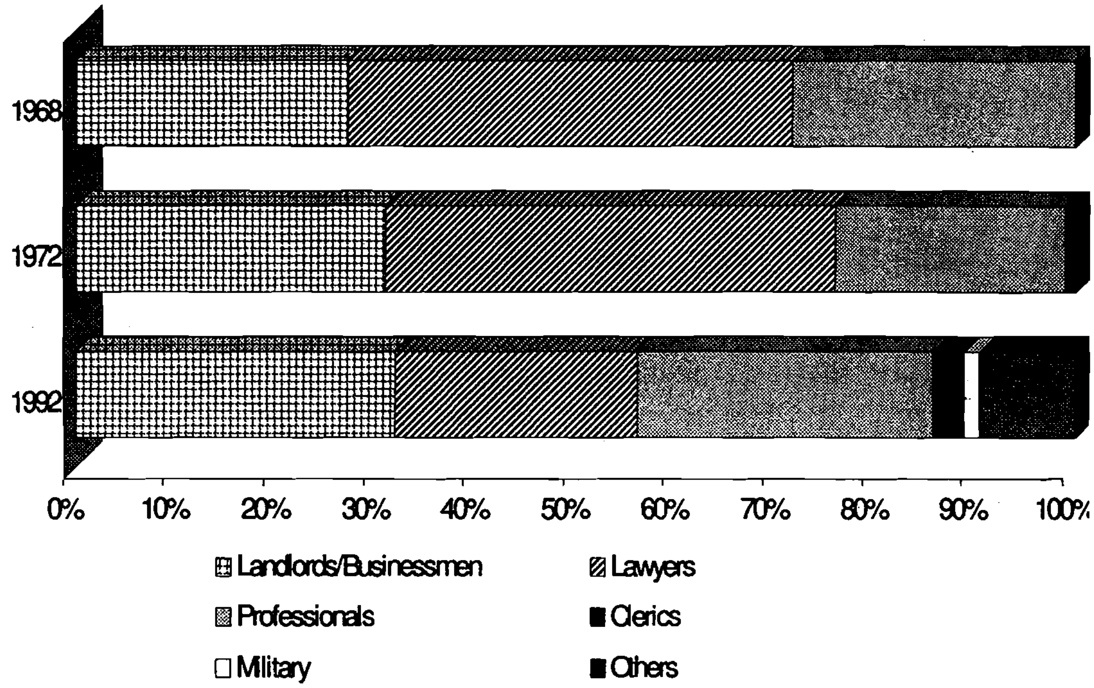
Source: Figures for the years 1943–72 are from Harik (1975, p. 210).

Occupational Backgrounds of the Deputies

The most prominent change in the occupational background of deputies in the 1992 Parliament was the increase in the number of businessmen and professionals and the drop in the number of lawyers, who decreased by about 20 per cent, as shown in Figure 9. Table 16 shows the occupational distribution of deputies by sect in the 1972 Parliament.

Although the new Parliament still has many lawyers, they are fewer than in the previous one.[46] The occupational composition of the new deputies reflects similar patterns to the overall Chamber, as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 9: *Occupational Distribution of Deputies, 1968–92 (in percentages)*



Source: Figures for 1968 are from Harik (1975, p. 203) and for 1972 Khalaf (1980, p. 250).

Level of Education

The educational level of Lebanese deputies has continued its post-1943 rise. University graduates in the 1992 Parliament reached 77 per cent, compared with 68 per cent in the 1972 Chamber, as shown in Figure 11, thereby making the educational level of Lebanese deputies higher than that of the average Lebanese citizen.[47] In this respect, an important change between the 1972 and 1992 chambers has been the decline in the percentage of deputies having only a secondary school education or less, from 32 per cent to 22 per cent.

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46. Ibid., p. 166.

47. Khalaf, op. cit., p. 248.

Table 16: *Occupational Distribution of Deputies by Sect, 1992*

	Ma	GO	GC	AO	AC	P	M	S	Sh	D	A
Landlords/ Businessmen	18	3	2	1	–	–	–	7	6	3	1
Lawyers	8	3	2	3	1	–	–	9	3	1	–
Professionals	6	3	3	1	–	1	1	5	4	2	1
Clerics	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	–	–
Military	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Others	1	5	1	–	–	–	–	4	11	2	–

Notes: Among the Christians, Ma = Maronite; GO = Greek Orthodox; GC = Greek Catholic; AO = Armenian Orthodox; AC = Armenian Catholic; and P = Protestant. M = Minorities. Among the Non-Christians, S = Sunni; Sh = Shi'a; D = Druze and A = Alawite.

Figure 10: *Occupational Distribution of New Entrants, 1992 (numbers and percentages)*

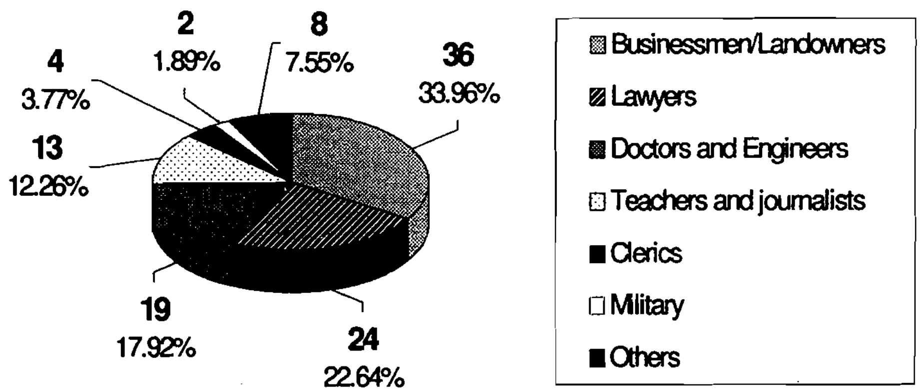
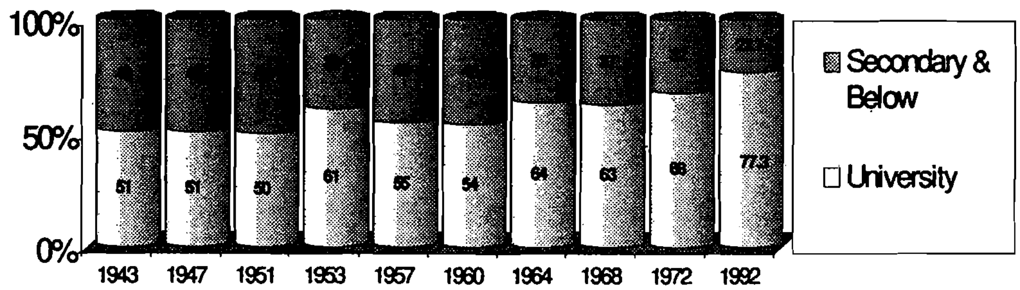


Figure 11: *Educational Level of Deputies, 1943–92 (in % terms)*



Source: Figures for the years 1943–72 are from Messarra (1977, p. 236).

Table 17: *Educational Level of Deputies by Sect, 1992*

	Ma	GO	GC	AO	AC	P	M	S	Sh	D	A
University	25	12	8	4	1	1	1	20	19	7	2
Secondary and below	9	2	–	1	–	–	–	7	8	1	–

Notes: Among the Christians, Ma = Maronite; GO = Greek Orthodox; GC = Greek Catholic; AO = Armenian Orthodox; AC = Armenian Catholic; and P = Protestant. M = Minorities. Among the Non-Christians, S = Sunni; Sh = Shi'a; D = Druze and A = Alawite.

Table 17 shows the educational level of the 1992 deputies by sect. Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Druze and Protestant have the highest percentage of university graduates, followed by the Alawis and Minorities. The relative distribution of the number of deputies with university and secondary school education is roughly equal among Maronites, Sunnis, and Shi'a. The institutions from which the deputies had graduated were both local and foreign. Many had received degrees from Saint Joseph University and the American University of Beirut, whereas others had graduated from universities in France and the United States. However, it was the first time that we find graduates of the Lebanese University, especially deputies from ideological parties and Islamist movements.

Party Affiliation

Neither electoral politics nor Lebanese politics generally have centred around political parties.[48] In democratic countries, party-based electoral competition is predominant. In Lebanon, it is weak. There are few parties that can be compared to Western ones. Lebanese parties are mostly cliques or loose groupings that owe their existence to a leadership based on the strong and effective *za'im*, who is usually the founder of the

48. See Michael C. Hudson, *The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon* (New York: Random House, 1968).

party.[49] During the war, most parties degenerated into militias or street gangs and engaged in acts of violence more against the communities they claimed to protect than against the declared enemy. This situation made party identity in postwar Lebanon a liability rather than an asset. The word 'party' (*hizb*) itself has today, in the minds of many Lebanese, become a pejorative word associated with the tribulations of the war. Party membership has not exceeded one-third of Parliament since 1964, as shown in Table 18.

While party representation decreased slightly compared with the previous parliament, change came in the form of party circulation as parties entered parliament for the first time, while others lost their representation, though the reasons for their departure differed. Table 19 shows the distribution of deputies from political parties by sect and constituency.

Most of the parties that did not return to the 1992 parliament were Christian-based ones that had boycotted the election. Ideological parties constituted the majority of those that entered for the first time, guaranteeing their seats by filling the vacuum left by others. The two most prominent examples were the SSNP and the Wa'ad Party. These two, in addition to the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, had support from Damascus. Other parties and political movements that were active during the war ceased to have any visible presence on the Lebanese political and electoral scene. Among these were the Sunni-based parties such as al-Murabitun in Beirut and, to a lesser extent, Harakat al-Tawhid al-Islamiyya in Tripoli. A Christian-based party, the Guardians of the Cedars, ceased to operate after Syrian troops entered Christian areas in 1990. Another, the Organisation of Communist Action, had been inactive since the PLO was driven out of Lebanon in 1982. Kamal Shatila, who lives in Paris and is leader of the Beirut-based Nasserite

49. On political parties in Lebanon, see Michael W. Suleiman, *Political Parties in Lebanon: The Challenge of a Fragmented Political Culture* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1967). On political parties and electoral policy, see Messarra, op. cit. pp. 71–95; Baaklini, op. cit., pp. 178–97; Ghanem, op. cit., pp. 113–40; Iliya Harik, 'al-Ahzab wa al-Tamthil al-Dimuqrati', in Riyad al-Samad and Samir Sabbagh, *al-'Amaliyya al-Intikhabiyya wa al-Dimuqratiyya fi Lubnan*, (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-Jami'iyya lil-Dirasat wa al-Tawzi', 1987), pp. 117–30.

Table 18: *Number and % of Party Members by Muhafaza, 1964–92*

	1964–72	1964		1968		1972		1992	1992	
	No. of Seats	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No. of Seats	No.	%
Beirut	16	7	43.80	9	56.00	7	43.50	19	8	42.10
Mount Lebanon	30	15	50.00	20	67.00	14	46.70	35	9	25.71
North	20	2	10.00	3	15.00	3	15.00	28	5	17.85
South	18	1	5.50	6	5.60	6	33.40	23	7	30.43
Bekaa'	15	3	20.00	0	20.00	0	0.00	23	5	21.74
TOTAL	99	28	28.00	30	36.00	30	30.00	128	34	26.56

Note: Parties having one candidate and no presence outside the district of the party leader are excluded: Mustapha Sa'ad's Nasserite Party in Sidon, Zahir al-Khatib's Rabitat al-Shaghili and Ali Eid's Arab Democratic Party in Tripoli.

Source: Figures for the years 1964–72 are from Baaklini (1976, p. 187).

Table 19: *Parties in Parliament by Sect and Constituency, 1972–92*

	1972 No. of deputies	1992 No. of deputies	Sect	Constituency
Christian based parties				
National Bloc	3	–	–	–
National Liberal	11	–	–	–
Kata'eb	7	–	–	–
Tashnag	4	3	2 AO, 1 AC	3 Beirut
Hanchag	–	1	1 AO	1 Beirut
Muslim based parties				
al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya	–	3	3 S	1 Beirut, 2 North
Amal	–	4	4 Sh	1 Western Bekaa', 3 South
Hizballah	–	8	8 Sh	4 Ba'albak -Hermel, 2 South, 1 Beirut, 1 Ba'abda
AICP (Ahbash)	–	1	1 S	1 Beirut
Other parties				
PSP	5	5	1 S, 4 D	3 Chouf, 1 Aley, 1 Ba'abda
Ba'ath*	1	2	1 A, 1 Sh	1 North, 1 South
SSNP	–	6	3 M, 1 S, 2 GO	1 Beirut, 2 North, 1 South, 1 Ba'abda, 1 N. Metn
Wa'ad	–	2	2 M	2 Ba'abda

Notes: Among the Christians, Ma = Maronite; GO = Greek Orthodox; GC = Greek Catholic; AO = Armenian Orthodox; AC = Armenian Catholic; and P = Protestant. M = Minorities. Among the Non-Christians, S = Sunni; Sh = Shi'a; D = Druze and A = Alawite. The National Bloc, National Liberal and the Kata'eb parties boycotted the elections. Parties having one candidate and no presence outside the district of the party leader are excluded: Mustapha Sa'ad's Nasserite Party in Sidon, Zahir al-Khatib's Rabitat al-Shagili and Ali Eid's Arab Democratic Party in Tripoli. *Pro-Syrian and pro-Iraqi wings.

Source: Figures for 1972 are from Messarra (1977, p. 79).

Table 20: *Party members by Sect, 1972–92*

	1972		1992	
	No of seats	No of party members	No of seats	No of party members
Maronite	30	13	34	5
Greek Orthodox	11	1	14	2
Greek Catholic	6	1	8	–
Armenian Orthodox	4	2	5	3
Armenian Catholic	1	1	1	1
Protestant	1	–	1	–
Minorities	1	1	1	–
Sunni	20	4	27	6
Shi'a	19	5	27	12
Druze	6	2	8	4
Alawite	–	–	2	1
TOTAL	99	30	128	34

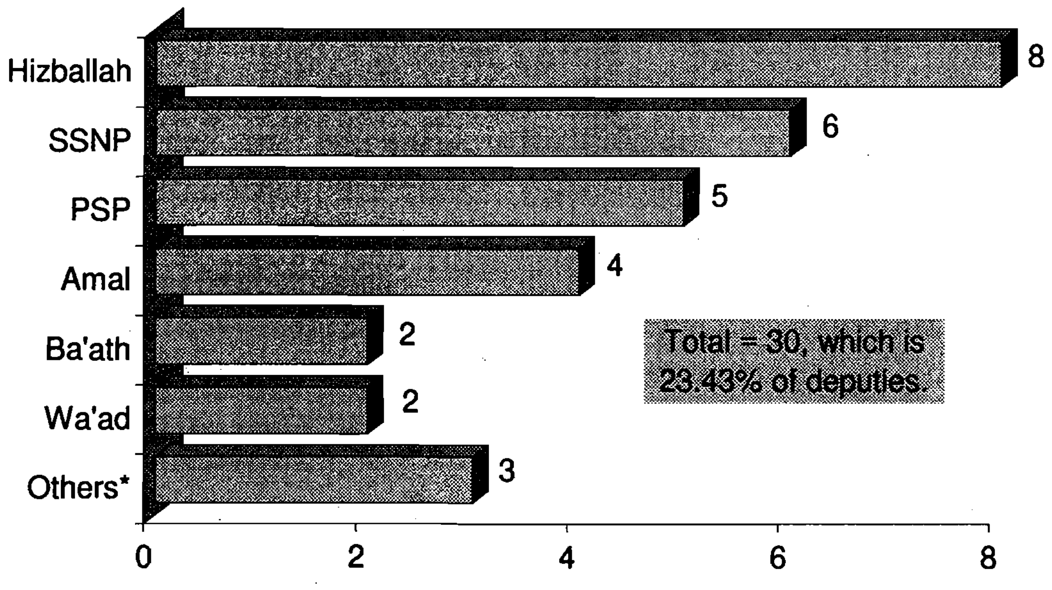
grouping, the Union of Working People's Forces, took part in the election but was unsuccessful. The Lebanese Communist Party, which was active politically and militarily during the war and had several candidates in various constituencies in the 1972 election, was unable to gain a seat in the 1992 parliament and even failed to gain one for its secretary-general George Hawi in the 1991 parliamentary appointments.

Expectations of a rise in party representation in the 1992 parliament — or at least a rise commensurate with the increase of deputies from 99 to 128 — were misplaced partly because of the Christian boycott and partly because parties' images have suffered and their popularity has declined, particularly among the youth who used to form the principal pool for party recruits. While party membership or support reached high levels in the first half of the 1970s, especially among university students, parties have since lost their broad influence.

No doubt the most prominent exception to the fortunes of political parties in the 1992 election was the rise of Islamist parties and organisations such as Hizballah, al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, and the Islamic Charitable Works Association (al-Ahbash). While these groups had

lacked an organised party presence ten or twenty years ago, they mobilised all their resources in 1992. Before the election, these groups had been active at the local level within their own constituencies, and in 1992 they invested all their political capital in the election. The performance of the fundamentalist parties reflected their political influence and electoral strength, at least under the current electoral law and the circumstances of the 1992 election. The Christian boycott benefited the Islamist candidates in Mount Lebanon and Beirut, but not necessarily in Ba'albak-Hermel, the South, and the North. The fortunes of Islamist candidates are like those of other political forces and parties, dependent on electoral alliances subject to changing political calculations. Finally, 1992 was the first time that Muslim deputies from political parties outnumbered Christian ones,[50] as shown in Table 20 above.

Figure 12: *Number and Percentage of Deputies from Parties involved in the War in the 1992 Parliament*



Note: *Parties having one candidate and no presence outside the constituency of the party leader are excluded: Mustapha Sa'ad's Nasserite Party in Sidon, Zahir al-Khatib's Rabitat al-Shaghili and Ali Eid's Arab Democratic Party in Tripoli.

50. Messarra, op. cit., pp. 77–81.

The percentage of deputies from parties or groups that took part in the war or were led by a militia leader reached 24 per cent, as shown in Figure 12. This percentage would have been higher had parties with a Christian base, such as the Kata'eb and the National Liberals, participated in the elections. A quick look at the Islamist parties shows that Hizballah added four seats belonging to allies to the eight seats of its members, making it the largest organised parliamentary bloc, while Amal, Hizballah's principal rival, gained only four seats.

Electoral Issues

Parliamentary elections in Lebanon were once an awaited event characterised by a high degree of political mobilisation that involved people from all sects and regions, ages and social groups.[51] This contrasted sharply with the 1992 elections in which the average citizen was uninterested. This indifference was especially marked among the youth (namely the 'war generation') who had reached the legal voting age during this period but had been unable to exercise this right because of the 20-year absence of elections.

The slight interest in the first election to be held in two decades, however, affected neither the electoral proposals nor incentives for candidates and voters. In prewar Lebanon, parliamentary elections had been largely a local affair involving narrow electoral issues, parochial concerns and short-term objectives. Rarely were elections tied to

51. On previous elections, see *al-Nahar*, 'Khamsin Sana wa Sana', December 1971–January 1972. Also, see 'al-Hayat al-Barlamaniyya fi Lubnan', (3 parts) *al-Nahar* 1968; Jean Ma'louf and Joseph Abi Farhat, *al-Mawsu'a al-Intikhabiyya al-Musawwara*, (Beirut: Nashr al-Mu'allifin, 1972); Camille Chehab, *1960: Les elections legislatives* (Beirut: 1960); Gideon Tadmor, 'The Lebanese Elections', *Middle Eastern Affairs* (June–July 1951), pp. 247–50; G. E. Kirk, 'Elections in the Lebanese Republic', *The World Today* (June 1957), pp. 260–5; Malcolm H. Kerr, 'The 1960 Lebanese Parliamentary Elections', *Middle Eastern Affairs* (October 1960), pp. 266–75; Nicola A. Ziadeh, 'The Lebanese Elections, 1960', *The Middle East Journal* (Autumn 1960), pp. 367–81; Jacob M. Landau, 'Elections in Lebanon', *The Western Political Review* (March 1961), pp. 120–47; Michael Suleiman, 'Elections in a Confessional Democracy', *The Journal of Politics* (February 1967), pp. 109–28. On municipal elections in 1963, see Elie Salem, 'Local Elections in Lebanon: A Case Study', *Midwest Journal of Political Science* (November 1965), pp. 376–87.

ideological or socio-economic issues or any well-defined electoral platform.[52] Candidates or a list's electoral programme were usually presented in general terms, characterised by vague slogans citing lofty goals. These proposals were presented to the electorate only a short time prior to election day. This was still the case in 1992.

The rather exceptional politically and intellectually stormy atmosphere of the 1970s was absent in the 1990s. The 1992 campaign contained no debate on fundamental national issues such as implementation of the Ta'if Agreement, Lebanon's participation in the Arab–Israeli peace talks, economic problems, or the government's performance in general — all of which could have spurred critical discussion. Likewise, ideological proposals of the left and right were absent, having lost their importance in Lebanon and in other countries in the post cold-war period. Lebanon is sharing in 'the end of history'[53] even if important issues that contain both ideological and religious dimensions are still on the platforms of radical Islamist parties. Such parties included the Shi'a-based Hizballah,[54] and the two Sunni groups, al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya and al-Ahbash. These groups entered the electoral contest like other political forces, setting ideology aside and making electoral moves with the utmost pragmatism and within the framework of Lebanese confessional politics.[55]

Procedural obstacles to discussing electoral issues plagued the 1992 elections. Of particular concern were the time periods between the passing of the electoral law, the setting of a date for the election and polling day. Even assuming that the country was mobilised for or against certain changes, there was insufficient time to hold general discussions about these matters, either through election campaigns or within a candidate's electoral programme.

The absence of electoral political agendas was another distinctive feature of the 1992 election. In 1992, electoral policy did not depend, as in

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52. See Ralph E. Crow, 'Electoral Issues: Lebanon', in Landau et al., op. cit., pp. 39–68.
53. Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History', *The National Interest* (Summer 1989), pp. 3–18.
54. On Hizballah, see Assaf Kfoury, 'Hizballah: La nebuleuse', *Arabies*, pp. 20–31.
55. See 'Fadlallah An al-Intikhabat wa Mustaqbal al-Muqawama', (interview) *Shu'un al-Awsat* (December 1992), p. 40; also, see Sarkis Na'um, *al-Nahar*, 16 September 1992.

previous elections, on calculating future political alliances for the post-election period. In prewar elections, these calculations had usually centred around competition for the three top political posts in the country (president, prime minister and speaker). In previous elections — especially when the new parliament was electing a new president — competition among candidates, whether within the same sect or in alliance with other sects, usually aimed at influencing the political alliances and interests of the new regime's supporters. In the parliamentary elections of 1947, 1957, 1964 and 1968, where candidates looked toward influencing the presidential elections of 1949, 1958, 1964 and 1970 respectively, this political dynamic occurred. In 1992, such considerations were absent. The electoral competition that produced the 1992 parliament — which will elect the next president — would no doubt have differed in form and substance under different political circumstances.

Incentives for Voters and Candidates

Contrary to expectations, the war did not change the motives and incentives of candidates or voters. The 20 and 30 year-olds who are usually politically active did not participate in the election and strongly supported the boycott, especially in Christian areas. Those relatively few who participated in the election did so for several reasons. Many hoped to influence government policies on services and personal interests. Candidates offered benefits to voters in exchange for loyalty.[56] In Lebanese political jargon, this is known as the policy of 'services' (*Khadamat*) through influence (*wasta*), which implies the intervention by politicians in the government bureaucracy in order to facilitate the affairs of their followers.

Family and clannish ties also motivated people to participate both in the countryside and in the cities, though more prominently in the rural areas. Furthermore, voters expected political and other rewards if candidates supported by the government were elected. Voting was also encouraged by financial contributions, which varied from local projects with a positive return for the community, to vote-buying and bribery on election day.

56. Messarra, op. cit., pp. 45–57.

The influence of money differed among constituencies, notably in the Bekaa', the South and the North.[57] Even religious or ideological motives for voting were mixed with other social considerations. Such mixed motives were evident, for instance, in the voting percentages for Hizballah in Bekaa'-Hermel, where the tribal fabric prevails, and for other Islamist movements in Akkar and Dinniyeh in the North. The Islamist groups also provided a wide range of 'services' in their regions of influence, which yielded positive results on election day. The 1992 election expressed most compellingly the effect of the 'services' factor on voting returns, for other effective factors were limited, especially where the boycott prevailed. In Northern Metn, especially in the constituency of Kisirwan-Ftouh, the 'services' factor had a decisive influence on encouraging people to vote despite the boycott.

Except for candidates from political parties and leading political figures (the so-called *al-Aqtab*), politicians such as local notables or independents ran to gain socio-political positions that provide patron–client benefits.[58] Some also ran to gain an elected office traditionally held by a family member, resulting in occasionally violent competition among sons, brothers and cousins within a single family. In addition, some candidates expect political rewards for their membership of parliament. Attaining a governmental post or appearing in the media is easier for deputies than for politicians outside parliament. More important, a position in parliament can bring large financial returns. Furthermore, the results of the war itself, which extended the parliament's tenure from four to twenty years, was an additional incentive to run. Those politicians who had narrowly missed becoming deputies in 1972 would not accept a second missed opportunity in 1992, irrespective of the controversies and problems surrounding those elections.

Several candidates pursued political opportunities made possible by politicians who boycotted the elections, especially in some of Mount

57. See former minister Shawqi Fakhouri's statement on the role of money in the elections of the constituency of Zahleh, *al-Nahar*, 25 August 1992. Also, see the statement of al-As'ad's list in *al-Nahar*, 25 August 1992.

58. On local policy during the mandate, see Iskandar al-Riyashi, *Qabl wa Ba'd*, (Beirut: Matba'a al-Irfan, 1953).

Lebanon's constituencies. Many candidates ran to gain media exposure, though they had no chance of winning and were not qualified to enter one of the principal candidate lists. They did this to gain fame or the title 'former candidate for Parliament' which would raise their social standing and their credentials for a future bid to a local *za'ama* in the village, neighbourhood or family. Indeed, parliamentary elections in Lebanon, before and after the war, gave notable status to 'new faces' aspiring to emerge on the political scene and to old figures hoping to secure or renew their *za'ama*.

Change in the 1992 Elections: The Role of the Aqtab and their 'Electoral Machine'

While several features of prewar electoral politics in Lebanon remained in 1992, at least three changes were of some importance: the influence of the *Aqtab* (or leading *zu'ama*); the role of the 'electoral keys' (*al-Mafateeh al-Intikhabiyya*) and voting patterns with respect to electoral lists.

With the notable exception of Druze leader Walid Joumblatt, who maintained and even strengthened his leadership in the Druze community, most traditional leaders have seen their power decline in recent years. In 1992, they could not exercise the kind of influence they had in the prewar period. Although most leaders with secure support bases kept their power in their electoral constituencies, this influence began to diminish relative to the prewar period.

For some leaders the relative decline of power was caused by the death of the established leader (such as Arslan, Chamoun, Gemayel, Franjieh, Karami, Skaff), be it father, brother or cousin. By and large, successors command less authority (disputed and weakened by internal family feuds), have less experience and enjoy less communal legitimacy. For others, influence retreated or collapsed in the face of militia control during the war years because the militias targeted the local leader and were his main competition. In the 1992 election, some of these political families regained their positions, perhaps because people had had enough of militia rule and its excesses. Other political families were less successful. For example, former Speaker of Parliament Kamil al-As'ad's leadership declined before the war following the emergence of strong

Shi'a rivals, notably Imam Musa al-Sadr. Traditional Shi'a leaders of the South and the Bekaa' saw their influence decline as internal and external forces radically and quickly transformed the political structure of the Shi'a community.[59] Other leaders, however, faced stiff competition from new ascendant political forces, represented especially by the Islamist movements of the Bekaa' and the North (for example Husseini, Hamadeh and Mer'abi). In Christian groups, the large popular base of the movement led by General Michel Aoun, who boycotted the elections, exemplified the new political force that could compete or overlap with traditional leaders or other politicians.

Two other factors shed light on the declining influence of the *Aqtab*. The first has to do with the implications of an expanded electoral constituency, which increased the authority of the strong *za'im* over his local popular base yet put him in the difficult position of having to deal with a wider and more diverse body of voters. This diminished both his influence over these voters and his ability to reach them directly. The second and more important factor was that Damascus had access to most leaders active in Lebanon, in all the communities and electoral constituencies. The Syrian leadership's political clout, together with its intimate knowledge of Lebanon's political map, made Damascus the ultimate power broker within all communities.

In previous parliamentary elections subject to external influences, the focal point of electoral politics had a domestic basis. Whatever pressure or influence foreign parties exercised in the past (such as financial and political support, or visits by candidates to certain Arab countries), only certain communities and leaders, but not the entire political elite, were targeted. In prewar Lebanon, the impact of foreign influence was limited both in form and substance, affecting electoral results only in some constituencies. This foreign intervention in parliamentary and presidential elections, however, occurred mainly in the 1940s and 1950s; it declined perceptibly in the 1960s and 1970s. The presidential election of 1970 and the parliamentary election of 1972 attest to that reality. Such

59. On Shia communal transformation in wartime Lebanon, see Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Mussa al-Sadr and the Shi'a of Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987).

intervention relied on popular support usually associated with Arab nationalist politics and was related to the continuing debate and disagreements over Lebanon's identity and role in the region's politics. Today, it no longer relies on a popular base, as was the case, for example, during the Nasser era. Moreover, the Ta'if Agreement has settled Lebanon's national identity as an Arab country.

The decline in the influence of the *Aqtab* did not translate into the emergence of an alternative political force whose popular support and influence surpassed the traditional established leaders. With the exception of the Islamist movements, this phenomenon did not emerge in the 1992 elections. A political vacuum, therefore, exists and will no doubt be filled in the future through freer and more orderly elections.

The decline in the power of the traditional politicians also led to a decline in the role and influence of the 'electoral keys'. Their role had included participating in election campaigns, searching for likely supporters, offering 'services', distributing money and observing the electoral process. The 'electoral keys' belonged to a generation whose average age had risen since the previous elections. Those who were in their forties or fifties, the group with the most experience in such matters, have now reached their sixties or seventies; others have either died or are no longer active. This age factor limited the effect of the 'electoral keys' in the 1992 election. Moreover, the 20-year hiatus in electoral activity led to the interruption of an otherwise continuous contact between the 'electoral keys' and their political bosses. While the four-year period between elections allowed the connection to continue between the *za'im* and his 'electoral keys', the 20-year absence of elections either decreased the loyalty of the electoral key to his *za'im*, or led to a break in this relationship. In addition, there is the negative effect of the absence of a new generation of 'electoral keys' with the experience of their fathers or relatives who had played these roles.

A new generation of 'electoral keys' was also prevented from emerging by the militias' entry into local politics and their competition with local *za'im* over political leadership and the 'machinery' of local politics. Many of the youth had joined militias and assumed military functions with accompanying financial rewards and other forms of compensation.

This occurred more in urban areas where local 'strongmen' (*qabadayat*) were active; they transferred their loyalty to the *zu'ama* of the militias.[60] Moreover, the hasty decision to hold the election did not help maintain the weight of their role. This is because candidates were given insufficient time to prepare for the election, undertake the necessary organisation and re-establish contact with the 'electoral keys', especially in large constituencies like the North and the South.

Finally, 1992 witnessed changes to the prewar voting model based on complete candidate lists. Voters resorted to choosing a mix of list candidates and independent candidates or others from a competing list. In electoral parlance, this is known as *tashtib*, which occurred in the 1992 election more than in any previous one. The reasons for this phenomenon include the decline in the influence of the major candidates, the formation of politically incompatible electoral lists, lack of coordination among members of a single list and the long period since the previous election. All this contributed to the decrease in voting for entire lists and to people in most constituencies resorting to *tashtib*.

60. Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State, 1940–1985* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986).

PART THREE

Elections With Imposed Choice

Elections in prewar Lebanon have contributed to the formation of the country's political elite and helped to shape the course of Lebanese politics. The elections also showed that 'the system [wa]s capable of limited, self-induced, structural modernisation'.[61] The legislature, however, despite having had a share in the development of Lebanon's political institutions, has operated more as a representative body than as an effective law-making institution.[62] Since 1943, the electoral process has seen constant development in terms of representation and in Parliament's political performance. By and large, parliamentary elections in the 1950s were less corrupt, freer and more representative than those of the 1940s. The 1960s elections, likewise, were better than those of the 1950s. This pattern of improvement continued until the 1972 elections recorded the best performance in both relative and absolute terms.

What applied to elections is equally applicable to the making of electoral laws since 1943. Contrary to the controversy that accompanied the promulgation of three electoral laws in 1950, 1952 and 1957, the law of 1960 was well received and was the basis on which four successive parliaments were elected every four years. Moreover, electoral reform figured in political discussions and debates. Parties, groups and politicians put forward many suggestions to make the electoral system more representative and more confessionally balanced.[63]

Unlike the general course of the electoral process in the prewar period, the 1992 election reversed this pattern and introduced new modes of

61. Michael Hudson, 'The Electoral Process and Political Development in Lebanon', *The Middle East Journal* (Spring 1966), p. 174.
62. See Ralph E. Crow, 'Parliament in the Lebanese Political System', in Allen Kornberg and Lioys D. Musolf (eds), *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1970), pp. 273–302; Abdo I. Baaklini, 'Legislative Reforms in Lebanon', in Abdo I. Baaklini and James J. Heaphey, *Comparative Legislative Reforms and Innovations* (Albany: State University of New York, 1977).
63. On electoral reform projects, see Antoine Messarra, 'Les propositions de reforme de la Loi electorale, 1963–1968. Essai de synthèse', *Revue Libanaise des Sciences Politiques* (January 1968–70), pp. 1–34. Also see Iliya Harik, 'al-Nizam al-Akthari wa al-Nizam al-Nisbi; Ayyahuma Afdal li-Lubnan?' *al-Nahar*, 11–12 May 1972.

government behaviour that are likely to undermine the country's openness and what remains of its democratic process. In contrast to the parliamentary elections of 1960, which were held two years after the 1958 crisis and after the crisis was settled, the 1992 elections were held amid heated debates over unresolved problems left by the war. The most important problem was the displacement of 450,000 people from all sects and regions from their homes and lands. Also, in contrast with the regime of President Chehab (1958–64), whose reform plan aimed to build state institutions and promote social justice, the 1992 election was conducted by a government that enjoyed little trust and inspired even less credibility. The government of Rashid al-Solh came to power after that of his predecessor Omar Karami was forced to resign because of the economic crisis; it was the first government in Lebanon to fall for a seemingly non-political reason.[64] But, al-Solh's government, which was expected to manage the country's economic problems, decided to call the election at a time when the national currency was collapsing and the economic cost of the election was very high. Lebanon lost desperately needed financial resources through the election being held in the summer. In the past, elections were usually held in the spring or autumn so as not to interfere with the summer tourist season and the large gains to the Lebanese economy.

The four or five months prior to the election, gave the impression that the regime was playing a frivolous political game. Declarations by the Minister of the Interior that preparing the corrected voter lists would take two years were followed by counter declarations that it would merely take a few months. While the cabinet decided that a voting card for the elections was an indispensable necessity for an orderly electoral process, the idea was dropped a few weeks before election day. This occurred after the cards were printed and the treasury had borne their cost.[65]

Another distinguishing feature of the 1992 election was that it took place, for the first time, in the presence of foreign troops, whether there with 'official approval' (30,000 Syrian troops) or with the 'approval' of unofficial parties (Israel in South Lebanon). Elections had not been held

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64. See Ghassan Tuéni, *al-Nahar*, 27 August 1992.

65. See Deputy Najah Wakim's statements on this issue in *The Lebanon Report* (July 1992), p. 3.

in the presence of foreign troops on Lebanese soil since 1943. That election, however, elected a parliament that abolished the French mandate and turned Lebanon into an independent state.

State Versus Society and the Packaging of Deadlocks

Irregularities and problems associated with the 1992 election notwithstanding, the electoral process did have some attributes, particularly at the level of local electoral politics. The 1992 election re-established the direct political contact between people and their parliamentary representatives that had been interrupted by the war. It also revived the principle of accountability through the return of some form of communication between the voter and the candidate. More important, the 1992 election reinstated the principle of a limited term in Parliament, with another election coming in four years' time.

The negative repercussions of the 1992 election were, however, quite numerous. First, they widened the rift between the state and the people. Absent from the 1992 election was what is known as the 'government's list'. This is not attributable to the neutrality of the state and its refusal to intervene in elections, but to the decline in the state's role in overseeing the country's general political course, and to the decline in its influence as a principal, effective actor in political life. It was also due to the limited ability of the state to make final decisions in matters of domestic and foreign policy. The decisive factor in the 1992 election lay neither with the state nor with the people. Rather, it lay in local political forces within each electoral constituency and the relationship these forces had with Syria, the major 'invisible' political force in postwar Lebanon.

Second, the 1992 election was also marked by the absence of political opposition capable of introducing change. This phenomenon, which was first apparent in the mid-1970s, reached its height in the early 1990s. In prewar Lebanon, opposition was a principal part of the political process. However, during the war the opposition became the political equivalent of boycotting, resulting in institutional paralysis. In the wake of the Ta'if Agreement, real opposition seems to have disappeared as loyal and opposition platforms became increasingly indistinguishable. Whatever the imperfections of Lebanon's prewar democratic political system, Lebanon was one of those few developing countries where opposition

politics made a difference and had a decisive impact on the political process. For example, it was intersectarian opposition that forced President al-Khoury to resign in 1952. The opposition also shaped the course of events between 1956 and 1958 and weakened President Chamoun's regime. The greatest impact of opposition politics, with far-reaching implications on Lebanese politics in the 1970s, was the opposition's electoral victory against the Chehabist establishment in the 1968 parliamentary election. This election and the political alliances it generated affected the outcome of the 1970 presidential election, which opposition candidate Suleiman Franjieh won by one vote. That one vote margin enabled the opposition to end more than a decade of Chehabist influence in both the army and government.

None of the vigour and assertiveness of prewar opposition politics are present in postwar Lebanon. Both government and opposition are stalled. Just as the government is unable to make final decisions on important (and sometimes unimportant) political matters, so the opposition is equally unable to hold government accountable and ultimately to bring it down and replace it. There are many vocal critics of the government and debates in Parliament are loud and can even get stormy, but they never translate into proposals for a vote of no confidence by the opposition or the resignation of the cabinet. Both government and opposition seem to have an undeclared quota of political manoeuvring they cannot surpass. In this way, deadlocks become inherent in the decision-making process and politics, internal and external, become a function of the skilful packaging of deadlocks. An opposition that does not abide by the pre-set rules of the game has no place on the political map of post- (violated) Ta'if politics.[66]

The tolerated form of opposition in Lebanon today lacks substance. When opposition leaders raise fundamental issues, they either make no real impact on the political process, or they opt for boycott and exit from the political process. The middle position, which allows the practice of an effective opposition from within the political system, has no place in the politics of Lebanon today. In other words, opposition politics that seeks not to change Ta'if but to enforce its proper implementation, is paralysed. This state of affairs was reflected in the manner in which 'rival' electoral lists

66. See Jihad al-Zayn, *al-Safir*, 15 August 1992.

were composed. Indeed, in no election was the overlap between government and opposition so complete as in 1992. The irony also lay in the fact that had real opposition forces existed and had they been effective, their demands could not have been entertained either by state institutions or by officials since the decision-making process is *de jure* in Lebanon and *de facto* elsewhere.

Third, the 1992 election deepened the internal sectarian divide on the one hand and the divide between state and society on the other. In the past, divisive issues revolved around the state, which provided the axis on which the political system rested. Today, no such role is performed by the state, while Christians and Muslims are still far apart. The election was held against the will of many Lebanese, notably the Christians, whose political and religious leaders voiced strong opposition to the electoral law and rejected the timing of the election, nor were Muslims any more content with the elections.[67] An internal dispute of such political and communal significance had never come to pass in prewar Lebanese politics.[68] The matter is all the more alarming since the issue involves free political choice through elections.

Fourth, the increased power of parliament, notably of its speaker, as stated in the amended constitution, gives elections and the new parliament unprecedented importance. The conduct and outcome of the 1992 election raise the question of the parliament's popular legitimacy. This is important not only because of the principle of sound representation, but also because representation has an additional political content in heterogeneous societies such as Lebanon's. In exceptional circumstances, such as the first parliamentary elections held in a country emerging from 15 years of war, elections are as politically significant as adopting a new constitution. Free elections could have given the post-

67. See Waddah Sharara, 'al-Intisarat fi Lubnan Mustamirra Nahwa al-Tathir al-Siyasi', *al-Hayat*, 14 September 1992; Khayrallah Khayrallah, *al-Hayat*, 17 September 1992; Bishara Shirbil and Ali al-Ruz, *al-Hayat*, 5, 6, 7 August 1992. Also see George Nasif, 'al-Intikhabat al-Lubnaniyya: al-Ab'ad al-Dakhiliyya wal-Kharijiyya', *Shu'un al-Sharq al-Awsat* (December 1992), pp. 23–30.

68. On the nature of pre-1943 Muslim opposition, see Edmond Rabbath, *La Formation historique du Liban politique et constitutionnel* (Beirut: Publications de l'Université libanaise, 1973), pp. 329–512; Farid el Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1991).

Ta'if political process the kind of popular legitimacy the making of the Ta'if Agreement lacked. Elections, which genuinely reflect people's preferences, would have given the transitional process from war to peace badly-needed popular legitimacy.

Fifth, the structure of fragmented representation, which the 1992 election produced, is cause for concern. A large number of deputies entered the 1992 parliament in unopposed electoral contests because of the absence of true competition through the vacuum caused by the boycott. This does not, however, mean that the leading figures of the 1992 chamber do not enjoy popular support, or that they would have failed to enter parliament under other electoral conditions. What occurred in 1992 was that strong and weak candidates won through 'negative election' leading in turn to widening the elite–mass gap in the 1992 parliament, particularly within the Christian communities.[69]

Finally, the election highlighted the geographic and political predicament of small countries situated between two powerful states, Syria and Israel, and in a regional environment swept by drastic social and political transformation. It was evident that the internal and external circumstances that surrounded the holding of the 1992 election reflected the peculiar nature of the state of affairs that prevails in postwar Lebanon. In other countries recovering from years of war, the role of elections is to make the transition from war to peace smooth and orderly. Such elections have attracted the interest and the active involvement of the international community. This was the case, for example, in Cambodia, where the United Nations ran its largest peace operation in its history. Cambodia, like Lebanon, was the scene of war and fragmentation but, unlike Lebanon, it attracted little attention from the international community.

Non-competitive Elections to the Benefit of Another State

In the light of the above, why were elections held in Lebanon and why specifically in the summer of 1992? Who benefited and why? One plausible explanation lies in what Guy Hermet calls the functions of non-

69. Farid el Khazen, 'Lebanon's Communal Elite–Mass Politics: The Institutionalization of Disintegration', *The Beirut Review* (Spring 1992), pp. 53–82.

competitive elections.[70] Though the reference to state-controlled elections in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes does not apply to Lebanon, the largely imposed and uniform character of the 1992 election has superimposed a state-controlled, non-competitive pattern of elections on Lebanon's non-authoritarian state.

Whereas the functions of competitive elections are well-defined (to provide an orderly succession of office holders, or help legitimise leaders and governments), non-competitive elections fulfil functions that are not so different from those fulfilled by competitive elections.[71] But, writes Hermet, they differ in that in a non-democratic regime:

> a government calling an election that it is not obliged to hold must expect such an event to have very specific functions or consequences. ... The fact of organising elections in a certain form and at a certain time never constitutes a gratuitous act. [For this reason] rulers must have serious motives for holding elections from which they, rightly or wrongly, anticipate certain benefits. [Such benefits relate to changing] the internal equilibrium of the governing circles by reshaping the distribution of power among groups in the country.[72]

While these functions identified with non-competitive elections apply, though in varying degrees, to the 1992 election, they are part of a process of electoral socialisation of groups and individuals that does not end once polling ends. Indeed, 'it is hoped that the population will get used to having no choice other than that imposed by the ... government, or even that it will forget its former, less restricted choice and will thus learn moderate electoral behaviour, making control eventually unnecessary.'[73]

70. Guy Hermet, 'State-Controlled Elections: A Framework', in Hermet, Rose and Rouquié (eds), *Elections Without Choice* (London: Macmillan Press, 1978), pp. 1–18; Richard Rose, 'Is Choice Enough? Elections and Political Authority', in Hermet, op. cit., pp. 96–212. See also Martin Harrop and William L. Miller, *Elections and Voters. A Comparative Introduction* (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), pp. 15–40.

71. Hermet, op. cit., p. 13.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

What kind of electoral behaviour should we expect in future elections and what benefits are we to anticipate from the 1992 elections? Only time and the actions of those who hold power will tell. But while states conducting non-competitive elections reap the fruits of their actions, as explained by Hermet, in Lebanon the ultimate beneficiary is not necessarily the Lebanese state. The latter may end up being a conduit for performing functions to the benefit of another state. The election mobilised the people, though in opposite directions, and reinstated a timetable for holding the next election in four years' time. Will the next election be held on time and overturn the electoral politics that prevailed in 1992? The answer lies in the government's political performance and in how the next election is handled.

More importantly, a new electoral law is needed, one that will ensure balanced communal representation.[74] But that is not enough; what is equally needed is an appropriate political environment for the conduct of orderly, free, and truly competitive elections. Only when electoral competition is amongst political forces and not amongst communities will national unity be promoted and the bases of civil peace be established on solid grounds. These are the desired objectives for a peaceful and stable postwar Lebanon whether before or after the holding of parliamentary elections.

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74. See, for example, Bernard Grofman and Arend Lijphart (eds) *Electoral Laws and their Political Consequences* (New York: Agathon Press, 1985), pp. 43–68, 113–23.